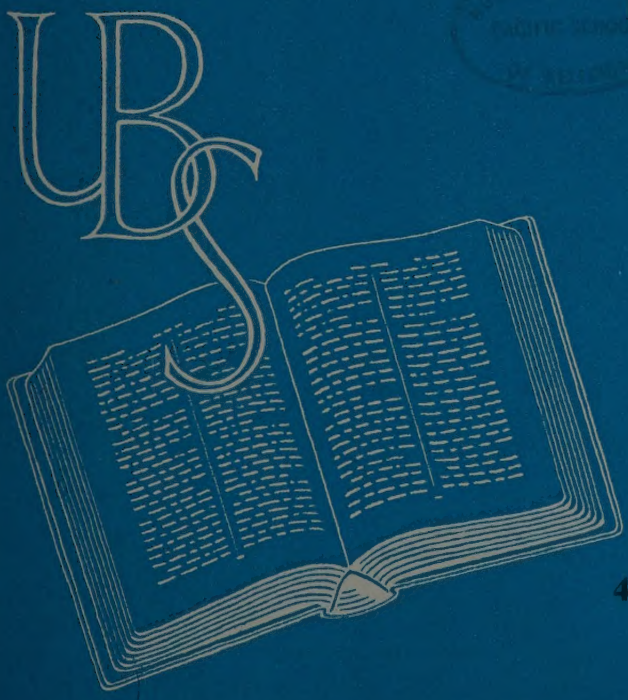
Bulletin—

of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

Number 40



4th Quarter
1959

146 Queen Victoria Street London EC4

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

A WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF BIBLE SOCIETIES

President

THE RT. REV. F. DONALD COGGAN,
Bishop of Bradford

Vice-Presidents

MRS. JESSE M. BADER U.S.A.

THE MOST. REV. I. SALOMIES,
Archbishop of Finland

DR. ALFONSO RODRIGUEZ HIDALGO,
Cuba

SIR SAMUEL RUNGANADHAN,
Bangalore

THE MOST REV. I. DE LOS REYES,
Manila.

Chairman of Standing Committee

THE REV. DR. WM. C. SOMERVILLE

General Secretary

OLIVIER BÉGUIN

Chairman of Council

Vice-Chairmen of Council

REV. CANON H. M. ARROWSMITH, Sydney

REV. P. A. COLLYER, New York

REV. DR. W. J. PLATT, London

REV. DR. WM. C. SOMERVILLE, Edinburgh

Treasurer

THE RT. HON. LORD LUKE OF PAVENHAM

Associate Treasurer

THE REV. DR. G. DARLINGTON

Study Secretary

THE REV. E. H. ROBERTSON

Annual subscription rates ..		Five shillings (British)
	or	U.S. $0.75
Individual copies ..	..	1/6 (British)
	or	U.S. $0.20

Subscribers are requested to pay these amounts or the equivalent value to the office of their national Bible Society (see list inside back cover)

Neither the Editor nor the Council accepts responsibility in detail for the views of contributors. Editors of other journals are at liberty to quote from articles or news items, provided they give the source.

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

BULLETIN

FOURTH QUARTER - 1959

The Place and Use of the Bible in the Churches

CONTENTS

		Page
Using the Bible	E. H. ROBERTSON	158
The Place and the Use of the Bible in Norway	S. SMAADAHL	162
Twenty-three Dutch Teen-agers and the Bible	F. VISSER	165
The Significance of the Bible in our East German Parishes	K. ZABEL	168
Place and Use of the Bible in the U.S.A.	C. W. LARSON	171
Canadian Churches in Search of Bible Treasure	F. E. VIPOND	174
The Use of the Bible in Indonesia	J. KOPER	176
The Bible and the Asian Church	S. J. DE S. WEERASINGHE	179
The Place and Use of the Bible in Brazil	O. K. K. NELSON	181
The Yeovil Experiment	D. BROWN	185
The 1959 Kirchentag in Münich	H. HOLZEL	188
Book Review		190
News From All The World		191
Personalia		200

Using the Bible

E. H. Robertson

THE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE of the *Bulletin* tell of survey work that is going on in different parts of the world. They are essentially varied, but part of a world study conducted from Geneva. Why Geneva? Because if this study is to achieve its purpose, that of stimulating a more effective use of the Bible, it must step outside the normal area of Bible Society work. That is why the study is conducted under the joint auspices of the United Bible Societies and the Division of Studies of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. Three things have to be done in this study and we need the help of national councils of churches, missionary societies and denominational boards if we are to do them.

I. We have to survey what is happening. What is the place and use of the Bible in the living situation of the Church? That means the local church, and the only effective way to find out is to go and live with a local congregation and enter fully into its life. No man or even group of men can do this with every local congregation in the world. Therefore a sample has to be taken. In each country there has been discussion with church leaders and Bible Society representatives to find out what constitutes a reasonable sample. The Study Secretary has thus had much travel to do, visiting countries where he can discover the pattern of Church life, its growing points in Bible use, and in that way prepare both background material and a list of sample local congregations for study. The next step was to prepare a meaningful questionnaire, that is, a list of questions that could be answered in the local situation and the answers to which would give the necessary information. Perhaps one example is better than a list of general principles.

Germany has been of special interest in this study because of the discovery of the power of the Bible during the Nazi period. It soon became evident that the eastern part of Germany, known as the D.D.R., would be particularly worth study. After a visit to Thuringia, covering several parishes, and a consultation in Berlin, it was possible to select 28 parishes as a representative sample of the D.D.R. The ministers of these parishes agreed to answer a specially prepared questionnaire. As in many other countries, the ministers agreed to consult with their people, so that the answers might contain more than the ministers' own opinions. The questions covered the main area of the Church's life and the part the Bible plays in private devotions, public worship and general activity. The answers to these questionnaires were followed up by visit and consultation, made possible by the Bible Societies in the D.D.R. All the material was then gathered together by one who knew the whole area and written up into a paper. This paper, a first attempt at a picture of Bible use in the D.D.R., was presented to the ministers, met together at a conference in Berlin. They then had the opportunity to correct anything in the paper that seemed to be overdrawn. They were also able to add material that gave a clearer picture. At that conference a further list of questions was presented to the ministers, concerning Bible use in five important areas of the churches'

life: worship, fellowship, ethical attitudes, witness and basic beliefs. These further questions are now being discussed. The final results should be an unprecedented report on Bible use in a limited area.

This kind of process, with national variations, has been gone through in many countries. The articles in this *Bulletin* contain reports from some of these lands. The survey often stimulates the Church under study and many have written to say what the questions have done for their church. One Protestant Episcopal minister in New York, for example, wrote : "Even the brief thinking we have done on the whole question makes quite clear the dreadful lack in our own use of the Bible in this parish. This alone is well worth the time you have given to us." Eventually, the material gathered under the study will be published, but already the process is doing its work of stimulation.

II. The second task of the study has been to assess effective Bible study and to answer the basic questions which the study raises. The material needs to be evaluated. As this material has been accumulated, the evidence of effective Bible use in certain areas and under certain conditions has emerged. Promising material has been further investigated and principles worked out for methods and attitudes of mind necessary for effective Bible study. At an early stage it became clear that certain methods of depth Bible study, certain forms of group meetings, and the rapidly developing house churches in many countries, showed evidence of effective use. On the other hand, it was discovered that no really effective method had yet been worked out for presenting the biblical truths to an industrial society. Both the discovery of effective methods and the discovery of particular needs have led to further study and the writing of exploratory papers for comment.

At the present stage of the study we are presented with certain basic questions, to which the study must attempt to provide answers. These questions may be listed under three headings:—

1. *Factors that make for effective Bible study*

A first essential for Bible study is that there should be a habit of Bible reading, but this can quickly turn to a formal use of the Bible. What the study on the place and use of the Bible is trying to discover are the factors that make for vital use rather than formal use. The factors that have to be examined are those of technique, environment and conception of biblical authority. Under this heading of *technique* will come the description of methods that have been discovered to be particularly effective in opening people's minds to the biblical message. Under the heading of *environment* must come home atmosphere and the preparation of adult church membership which is given by the churches. Perhaps also under this heading comes the question of whether a crisis is necessary before people will search the Scriptures with sufficient urgency to make their study vital. The question of *biblical authority* has been the subject of many papers and books and it is not the purpose of this study to determine what is the biblical authority. The question that needs to be asked is how far one's attitude to the Bible produces or hinders effective Bible use. It is possible that something other than a theory of biblical authority is in question here. There seems some evidence, for example, that what is needed is not so much theory of why the Bible is the Word of God, but a sense of confidence in using it as an authority relevant to our problems.

2. *The Bible and the renewal of the Church*

The question of what is effective Bible study usually leads into the realm of what difference it makes when a group within a church gives itself to a study of the Bible. There is some importance in examining the effect on personal life, but that is more easily accomplished than a study of the effect on the renewal of the church. In order to ask this question properly, there is need to look into various aspects of the church's life and see how these are renewed or not by effective Bible use. There may be many such areas but among them will certainly be the witness of the church, its worship, its unity and its upbuilding. This goes beyond the question of method and enters the field of effect of any method upon the life of the church. It is possible to imagine a live Bible study group which is having no effect at all, or even a destructive effect, upon the life of the local Christian community. There will thus be need to examine the extent to which movements of Bible study are really connected with the internal life of the churches. Then this connection must be further developed to see how far current use of the Bible contributes to or hinders the renewal of the church.

3. *The Bible and the individual*

The effect of Bible study upon the individual depends, of course, upon the man we are dealing with. Questions have to be asked as to what conditions are conducive to an effective understanding of the Bible. Does the reader need to have a certain standard of education? Does he need to have a certain temperament? This is a wider question than appears at first sight and it may explain why so many people who are regular church attenders have so little to do with the Bible. Under the same heading of the effect upon the individual comes the effect that the Bible has upon a man when his life is changed through confrontation with its message. What really happens in a biblical conversion? This means looking at specific examples and seeing if in any way we can generalise. There are examples of men who, on reading the Bible, have felt their whole life changed. It would be of immense value if we could discover what really happens and how the full biblical message is communicated with such force. This may lead to the more general question of what effect the Bible has upon those who are outside all contact with the churches. What does the Bible mean in fact to those who are reading it without help? Can it mean anything at all or does it need some interpretation? Again, is the reading of the Bible only of meaning when it is supplemented by Christian fellowship and Christian worship? There is a whole range of questions here on the effect of the Bible on the individual, whether he be a church member or an outsider, whether he be mildly interested in it or whether it change his whole life.

III. As the basis of the study has been the assembling of information about the real situation at the congregation and parish level, the Study Secretary has been in close touch with several hundred local situations throughout the world. An investigation cannot be conducted in a local church without disturbing it and there is evidence of disturbance all over the world. Usually this disturbance has led to better use of the Bible in the church under study. That alone is a legitimate aim of the study.

Several churches have asked for advice and that has been given from experience gained in other churches. At a national level, the newly formed "Menighets Institutt" in Norway has sought help in the field of approach to an industrial society. This has been given freely from the experiences gained in

Britain, Germany, Holland and the U.S.A. Such advice is given in the form of recommendation to experiment. The results give rise to further insight into the problem. One such example is given in this *Bulletin* by Denis Brown under the heading "The Yeovil Experiment". Other towns in Britain have taken up similar experiments and there are plans for a joint Canadian-U.S.A. Bible Week in Buffalo, New York. Scotland has already developed a Kirk Week, including Bible study conducted on lines developed by the study.

There is of course no one method of Bible study. Different traditions require different methods. Some basic principles, however, are common to all effective methods, and among these three are of special importance.

1. Bible study should be at considerable depth. There is no place in effective Bible study for a superficial examination of the text. All the work which the liberal theologians did in examining the text, writing critical commentaries and exploring the background information, needs to be taken into consideration in our study of the Bible. The liberal movements in theology may have had a bad time recently, but it would be foolish to ignore the positive results of their Bible study. We need therefore to use the best commentaries, and academic study still has its place within our study of the Bible. No man can begin to discover what the Bible is saying to his situation until first of all he knows what it means and what it was saying to the situation for which it was written. This depth Bible study will require asking a number of essential questions.

First, what happened? An effective Bible study must face difficulties quite honestly, dealing with apparent inaccuracies at a deeper than superficial level. It is not enough to say, "The Bible is true". It must be shown to be true and its apparent over-emphasis upon certain points in history explained. For example, why does the Bible concern itself with Israel and say so little about the great empire of Egypt? It is necessary to know why biblical history reads differently from other history. We must not be afraid to apply the usual tests of historical accuracy to the Bible, because they will lead us to a deeper understanding. The second question is, what does it mean? A full knowledge of the background to a Bible statement may be essential if we are to grasp the real meaning of a verse. It may be much easier to jump at a superficial meaning, but to do so will mean to miss what that passage is saying to us. This will also require honesty. A man who has used a verse either in preaching or in argument, and then discovers that the verse could not possibly have meant what he has made it mean, must be prepared to accept the new insight. This requires hard work and honesty. The third question is, why has the writer been led to preserve this passage? Almost every writer in the Bible—prophet or evangelist—had a great deal more material than he used. When the Holy Spirit led him to make a selection of his material, e.g. which prophesies to write down, which stories of Jesus to tell, we may assume a reason for the choice. If we can discern that reason we are beginning to get to the heart of the passage. Effective Bible study is always depth Bible study.

2. Bible study must be related to the situation in which the people find themselves. All traditions have erred on this principle. The pietists have separated themselves from the world and the liberals have sometimes been guilty of enjoying the Bible apart from its real application. We have all fallen short, but an analysis of really effective Bible study shows that in every case there was an attempt made to relate the insights of the Bible study group to the world outside. This can only be done by a constant asking of questions. When

we have discovered what the passage means we need to go further and say: what does it mean to me? Now the danger of such a question is that it will still remain within the purely personal realm. The Church has long experience of dealing with personal problems and a rather bad experience of dealing with public problems. There are groups in some parts of Europe where the members, after studying the passage, go out and try to live by it during the coming week. They then report back on how they have fared. This may not be the best way to do it, but at least it thrusts into the group every week the kind of questions which you must ask if you are going to live by the passage you are studying in the real world. So that the question becomes more than: what does this passage say to me? It becomes: what will this passage say to me to-morrow when I am at my work?

3. Bible study is at its best when it is group thinking. Of course, the centuries have many examples of the way in which a man alone can hear the Word of God through the Bible. The stories of prisons and concentration camps tell us constantly of how powerful Bible study can be under such conditions. Yet in general it remains true that the best Bible study is done when a group of people are met together, determined to find out what the Bible means to them. There are many obvious reasons for this principle. Individually you are more inclined to look in the Bible for things that will support your own idea. A group can correct this because different members will have different ideas. A man alone with his Bible, even when he is supplied with the best commentaries, is only getting instruction from others, whereas in a group he is getting encounter with them. All the examples of Bible study which have been really effective suggest that the disciplined use of group thinking will make the Word of God sound more clearly from the passage than any book or individual thinker can. The experience of the Germans under the Nazis seems to me to be decisive on this point.

On this basis each must build his own structure.

The Place and the Use of the Bible in Norway

Sverre Smaadahl

THE STUDY ON THE PLACE AND USE OF THE BIBLE has been going on in Norway for the last three years. Groups of 10-20 persons in twenty-two congregations, of different kinds, all over the country have worked their way through two questionnaires—one general and one more detailed. This material has been gathered by the Bible Society and a socio-psychologist has evaluated the results. Besides this, the Rev. E. H. Robertson has visited a number of congregations for personal interviews.

At the beginning of the study we felt a little "indiscreet" in asking people about their use of the Bible. The reaction, however, has been very positive. Working with the questions, the members of the groups became aware of the weaknesses in their use of the Bible, and asked us for help. Secondly, the visits of Mr. Robertson have been a great inspiration to the congregations. Very often, Bible study outlines were ordered from the Bible Society by congregations immediately after his visits.

Background information

To get the right understanding of the place and use of the Bible in Norway, some background information is necessary. Since the Reformation, Norway has had an established State Church, and 97% of the population belong to the Church through infant baptism. The Bible has a place in planned education. Religious instruction is given at public schools, high schools and at the gymnasium. While Bible reading has little place in the high school and gymnasium, however, pupils in public schools have Bible reading with comments from the 5th grade onwards. The Gospel of St. Mark and Acts are the books mainly studied, while other parts of the New Testament and Old Testament are also read. Nearly every Norwegian boy and girl of 15 takes the confirmation course of about 40 lessons. Usually one Gospel is studied and commented on. Knowledge about the books of the Bible is also required.

There are 27,000 Sunday School children in Norway, out of a population of 3 millions. The majority of children go to the State Church Sunday Schools, which follow the Gospel lectionaries of the Lutheran Church. The Free Church Sunday Schools use passages selected from the whole Bible.

The Bible is always read and preached from in public worship. At regular Sunday morning services two passages from the Gospels (one for the sermon) are read and one from the Epistles. There are three lectionaries to be followed in a cycle of three years. Portions of the Bible are also read in different parts of the liturgy.

The Norwegian Church has a very strong pietistic laymen's movement, dating from the 1850's. Historically, there has been tension between the established Church and the independent voluntary organisations for home and foreign missions. Years ago lay preachers were not allowed to preach in the churches, so prayer houses were built. To-day there are about 1,000 prayer houses in Norway, while there are about 1,200 churches. Meetings often take place several days of the week in the prayer houses and also on Sundays. During these meetings the Bible is always read and preached from. The ministers are often active in these prayer houses, where most Christians gather from time to time. The minister arranges Bible instruction when he gathers members of the congregation together for the study of texts from the Bible.

The present situation

Since Bible study is carried out in local congregations, no representative picture for Norway in general can be given with regard to the place and use of the Bible. Some trends have, however, become clear. First of all is that of the disproportion between the reading of the Bible and the listening to preaching and reading of devotional books. The amount of knowledge people acquire through their own study of the Bible is very little compared to what they receive through preaching. They have become used to passive listening and do not feel the need of regular and planned study of the Bible. When the Bible is read regularly, answers to the questionnaires show that only parts of it are read. Reading of the New Testament predominates and when the Old Testament is used, it is limited to the Psalms and one or two of the Prophets. This is the rule in general terms. While the amount and way of preaching are probably the main reasons for a decline in the use of the Bible, the lack of a plan for daily Bible reading seems to be the reason why it is mainly the New Testament which is read. The books of the Old Testament seem too difficult. This two-fold

problem is an important one both for individual Christians and for the congregations. As an interesting 'corrective' to this situation among so many Christians may be mentioned the findings of another inquiry among a representative group of Norwegians about their habits of church-going. They were asked at the same time if they had read their Bibles during the course of the last fourteen days. While less than 5% could be said to go to church regularly, as many as 36% said they had read their Bibles during the last fourteen days! Not a word about why they had done so and what they had read, but just stating this very interesting fact, which confirms the second main observation in our study and reminds us of the great interest in the Bible among 'non-church' people. For the active Christian, the need for better Bible use is obvious. At the same time, the so-called 'church strangers' show interest in the Bible. The reasons for this interest cannot easily be discussed. We are faced with a challenging fact.

In the answers to the questionnaires, the reasons given for the slight and often poor use of the Bible are those we might imagine. The Bible is a difficult book to read for modern man. It is much easier to sit down and listen or to read another book. At a time of many changes and much noise, people have no time to sit down quietly to read the Bible. Its language seems old-fashioned, especially to young people. By and large, it does not seem 'natural' to take up the Bible and read it. Many ministers report that very often in their sermons they tell people to read their Bibles. In fact, that is what the lay preachers do too. But, as we have seen, the results are not satisfactory. It is not sufficient to rely on planned education and Sunday Schools or on a large amount of good preaching. It is not even sufficient to say that people ought to read their Bibles. The Bible does not hold the same obvious position as it did in the past in the life of Christian men and women. They say—and mean—that the Bible is the holy word of God and that it is the best source for Christians to drink from; yet in practice the situation is different. We have learnt that neither the authority of the preachers nor the authority of the Bible any longer carry weight. We must now say *why* the Bible should be read, *how* it should be read and *what* people should read. And always in very practical terms.

New ways of working

The Bible Society had already considered this situation, which became so evident as a result of the study. This insight, together with the increasing sale of Bibles, confronted the Bible Society with an important challenge to do something to promote the use of the Bible. This is not to say that the Bible is not used, but that it is not sufficiently used, and that many Bibles are left unopened on the bookshelves. To meet this challenge the Bible Society appointed a secretary to visit the congregations and help to start the Bible study groups. Answers to our questions from the congregations show that groups are eager for better use of the Bible, for more frankness between Christians, for more active service by Christians and even for more reaching out towards non-Christians. Four years ago we sold about 7,000 plans for daily Bible reading annually; to-day we sell 14,000—mainly because of the growth of the Bible study group work.

The idea is to build up neighbourhood groups, where 5-10 people meet twice a month to study the Bible. The 1,000-1,500 groups at work prove the need of Bible study, the interest in it and the value of the Bible study group. When some congregations reported that they had no groups, they gave the reason that they had no leaders. That answer was given before they knew of our Bible study

outlines. They are by no means commentaries, but rather 'recipes' to be followed by the group. A number of such outlines have been produced on different books of the Bible. Thus any Christian can lead a group. The practice is for a few Christians to get together for study and after a while to invite their neighbours, whether they are Christians or not. What is most exciting is that they accept the invitation and come! They are interested in the Bible and find it much more natural to come to a home than to a church. The neighbourhood group plays an important part in leading Christians back to the Bible and new men and women to the Bible.

There is also a very valuable relationship between the Bible study group and the personal use of the Bible. One might think that participation in a group could be an excuse for not reading the Bible daily. Quite the opposite! Through the group work, the Bible becomes more rich and interesting. In fact, participation in a group leads to the better daily use of the Bible.

One more thing has to be mentioned to explain the rapid growth of Bible study groups. Inspired by Lutheran churches in the U.S.A. and in Germany, and by the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, 'preaching, teaching, reaching missions' have been held in two or three congregations in Norway. Such missions require much from the Christians in a congregation and the spiritual preparation for them is most important. For this preparation, the Bible Society produced a special Bible study outline which is very widely used. In a single congregation, up to 50 Bible study groups were at work for a year before the mission. Even more important may be the fact that not a few of these groups go on after the mission, as a means of follow-up. Bible study groups are certainly becoming more and more usual in Norwegian congregations.

The Bible study group plays an important part both in the life of the congregations and of individual Christians. They may, in the course of the years, change for the better the place and use of the Bible in Norway.

Twenty-three Dutch Teen-agers and the Bible

F. Visser

IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE to give detailed information already in this issue of the *Bulletin* regarding the enquiry into the use of the Bible which is going on in Holland at the moment. We have not yet got quite far enough to draw final conclusions. But it may be interesting for those who are themselves engaged in a similar enquiry, to hear something about the original method followed in one of the most southern cities of our country. Protestantism there means only a very small group among an almost completely Roman Catholic population. Yet there is a government school for the training of teachers, and this school is attended by all non-Roman Catholics who wish to qualify as teachers.

Nearly all these pupils receive religious instruction in this neutral school under the auspices of the Church. It is given by two pastors.

Between themselves, they made up a questionnaire, which they ask their pupils to answer in writing during lessons.

The following is a translation of this questionnaire. Perhaps it might serve anywhere in the world to set a similar enquiry afoot:

Questionnaire

We ask you to co-operate in an enquiry regarding the use of the Bible in the Netherlands. A preliminary enquiry is being made in some 10 cities. Ours is among them. Of this research nothing will be published in such a form as to render conclusions of a personal character possible. Therefore, please give your own ideas as honestly and as critically as you can. This would help us a lot. You need not mention your name and address.

1. Boy or girl.
2. Age.
3. Which school; which class.
4. Father's profession.
5. Which elementary school did you attend?
6. As far as you heard biblical stories in the elementary school:
   (*a*) Do you remember much of them?
   (*b*) What impression did that biblical instruction make upon you?
   (*c*) Did you ever have a Bible in your hands at the elementary school, for reading?
7. Have you attended Sunday School? Write down your impressions of it.
8. Is the Bible, or a children's Bible* read in your family at home? Which one? Which do you prefer, the Bible or the Children's Bible?
9. In connection with the preceding question:
   (*a*) What do you think of this reading—is it any use?
   (*b*) or do you think it is only tedious?
   (*c*) Would you do it yourself in the same manner, later on, or in a different manner?
   in the latter case: how then?
   or would you not do it at all?
10. Do your parents or yourself ever discuss the biblical message at home?
11. (*a*) Do you think the Bible should come up for discussion in these religious instruction hours? If so, why? If not, why not?
    (*b*) Do you ever read the Bible for yourself? If so:
    (*c*) Do you do it in order to find out things?
    (*d*) or because you think it is beautiful?
    (*e*) or just as a habit?
    (*f*) If not, what are your objections?
12. What is the significance of the Bible in your opinion?
13. What do you find most interesting in the Bible?
14. The Bible is said to be very important for Protestants.
    Please give your opinion on this statement.
15. Under this point, please express everything which the above questions have not provoked. For instance, in relation to the translation of the Bible, the language used, personal use, use during service in church, in youth services; conversations regarding some Bible pericope, or evening service in summer camp, etc., etc.

This questionnaire has been answered by 23 pupils: 3 girls and 20 boys. Their ages varied from 16 to 21 and they nearly all come from middle class families, such as those of practical managers. On reading the answers it became apparent at once that these teen-agers are an appropriate group for such an

* In the Children's Bible biblical stories are retold, adapted to the understanding of children. As a rule they are illustrated.

enquiry. They are at a very critical age and do not hesitate to give honest answers to the questions. Furthermore, they are not quite so young as not to understand the problems raised, but on the other hand are still young enough not to give long-considered answers (which so often become lifeless), and to stand up for their opinion frankly. And that is what happened. The result is that we can now study what the Bible means in the lives of these 23 young people.

The answers do not give much material for statistical conclusions. They are appreciated best when at the same time one considers who is the informant, and how he answered the other questions. This holds good also for this entire research on the use of the Bible. It deals with living human beings and moves within a very intimate field, into which people do not much like to introduce a stranger. And often one discovers still more behind an answer than within it. For these reasons every filled-up blank is worth study and, when seriously pondered, yields a very personal portrait.

Yet it is possible to draw a few general conclusions.

1. Out of the 18 informants who attended a Christian elementary school, only 4 answered question 6(*a*) positively and consequently still remembered much of what had been told them from the Bible at the time. Of the others, 11 only remembered very little of it. On the other hand, 10 out of these 18 declared that this biblical instruction had made a very good impression upon them. It can therefore have a certain significance for life even if one does not remember much of it!

2. To question 6(*c*), whether the elementary school had ever put a Bible in their hands, 16 out of the 23 replied in the negative. So biblical history had been taught, but not personal contact with the Bible. Especially for those who after elementary school did not go on to a secondary school, but went straight into a trade, this is a great danger. Will they ever come to a school or to a catechism class in later life where they are shown the way in the Bible? In the course of our enquiry into the use of the Bible we came across this point more than once. And it will probably cause our Bible Society to ask the Christian elementary schools, which usually present their pupils with a Bible on leaving school, to do this one year earlier, teaching them at least to some extent how to use it during their last school year.

Question 8 was answered by 10 to the effect that the Bible or a children's Bible was regularly read at home; 5 of them said it happened now and then, 8 said: never. The majority of them prefer the Bible to the children's Bible. But then follows question 9(*a*): is it any use? Here there are 13 who say yes. Out of these 13, 10 are from families where Bible reading is still practised; the other 3 came from families where there is none. These three, therefore, in accordance with genuine teen-agers, intend later on to be a correction of their parents. A similar action is revealed in the answers to question 9(*c*): would you do it yourself in the same manner, later on, or in a different manner? There were three who said: exactly as at home. But the others know better methods: "Not every day at the same moment. That would become routine work. But at certain moments. And then specially chosen Bible portions. That's living. And not only father is to read, but mother and the children just as well. Everyone in turn. Or at night, just before going to bed. Then you can still talk it over just a moment, and think it over. Or: just take one text and discuss it together, with father and mother as discussion leaders". There are several who

would prefer later on, when they will have children of their own, to re-tell the Bible in their own words. For . . . . and here they nearly all agree: the language of the Bible is "too learned, too archaic, not clear, too involved".

So here we are! And to think that we have given to our country a new version of the Bible! It is true: one of our informants thinks our new version "reads easier", and another calls it "a great improvement". But a third finds it still "much too complicated". Indeed research like this always leads on to a new task for the Bible Society.

Of course much more might still be said about these 23 glimpses of Dutch family life. Nevertheless, we will stop here because we have already shown clearly how important it is for a Bible Society not merely to distribute Bibles, but also to realise how they are used and . . . . . not used.

The Significance of the Bible in our East German Parishes

(*This paper represents a section of a longer study prepared by* Dr. K. Zabel, *in the framework of the Study on the Place and Use of the Bible in the Churches, and based on a case study made in collaboration with the pastors and laymen of a number of parishes.*)

IT IS CHARACTERISTIC of the situation in which we find ourselves that to the question "What do you think of the Bible?" the first answer given is more than once—"Many people have stopped thinking at all, therefore they don't think of the Bible either". If one brings them on to this subject, they have hardly anything to say. The Bible is as far from the thoughts of most people as a cookery book is from the thoughts of most men. Even in the Protestant Church, which is conscious of being founded on the Holy Scriptures, the Bible has lost its significance. Even to faithful church-goers it has become an unknown book. It is the book of the minister and has its honoured place in the religious service. But it is not a home and family book.Its influence is confined to the sermon. It seems as though the Bible text, which is read or read aloud, has ceased to have any missionary power; as though it required to be transposed and graphically presented for the people of to-day. But since the sermon is heard only by the few, the Bible can hardly have any influence on public life. Most of the parish having for decades past completely lost the habit of attending church services, the desire for the Word of God has died out in the home as well. It is therefore not surprising that in our parishes we find that to-day a universal hazy judgment has been formed of the Bible. This, as a rule, is expressed by saying that the Bible is still held to be a revered book, indeed even a "sacred" book, but that as a normal individual, one does not usually read it. In any case, the vast majority of parish members hardly glance at the Bible from the cradle to the grave, although there is still a Bible in most homes. No Bible study circle, however good, however alive, no church attendance, however gratifying—and such attendances do occur here and there in some parishes—must be allowed to blind us to the fact that by far the greater number of our parish members

have absolutely no access to the Bible. People are not directly against it, but they are also far from being sufficiently interested in it to spare the time and trouble to delve into it, to read it and live according to its teaching.

Who does take up the Bible? In the first place, the old, the lonely and the sick; in the second place, those who conform to the church services, the Bible study circles and other congregational groups; in the third place, the members of the "Junge Gemeinde" (i.e. the young, already confirmed, section of the congregation). But even in these groups it is by no means all, but only some, who do so. How many? To try to indicate this in terms of figures is difficult. Probably 80% of the parish members never read the Bible; the percentage rate may however be considerably higher. To express it in more general terms, the answer will be: it is read by only a few; only very small sections of the community read the Bible. To the majority of members belonging to the parish, the Bible means very little or nothing at all. If one attempts to say positively who reads the Bible, the answer will be something like this: a small nucleus in the parish, the pick of the parish who earnestly want to be Christians, the small band of those to whom the words of Jesus from St. Matthew's Gospel (Ch. 4:4) mean something, to those who cannot live without the bread of life, those who are aware of belonging to the congregation, the real church members. When faced with this first question as to what people think of the Bible, we can therefore already see quite distinctly that the congregations, as they still subsist in virtue of the Volkskirche (i.e. the people's church), and the band of those who are Christians in the same sense that they "belong to Christ" and are "Christ's followers" are now identical only to an extent which is growing smaller and smaller to the point of vanishing.

What, practically considered, do people in these circles understand by the "authority of the Bible" and by the "Word of God"? Where people read the Bible regularly, it certainly is not out of aesthetic, historical or literary interest, but with a view to deciding their personal way of life. To be sure, when the parishioners look upon the Bible as their guide for every-day life, they still do not know how they are to apply the sayings of the Bible to their daily mode of behaviour. It is in this connection that one can discern the practical difficulty in which parishioners find themselves to-day. Many are in danger of resigning and of practically leading two lives; in public, a life which does not keep to the teachings of the Bible, and in the congregation and family another life, more dependent upon the Bible. For instance, in public life there is hardly a Christian left who will pray before or after a meal, a thing which, in the bosom of his own family, he is accustomed to doing as a matter of course. Thus to-day, the authority of the Scriptures is limited by worldly authority. Even though one is aware of a certain anxiety and regret at this tension, which, it is felt, is not really as it should be, it is usually the authority of the Bible, and only most infrequently the secular claim, which is modified by the antithesis between the demands of the Bible and those of public life. The Bible is still accepted as the authority in matters of piety and morals, but it is no longer accepted as binding in the last resort. And so it comes to this, that the members of the best congregations in fact regard the Bible as the Word of God, which they must and want to obey, but that even they nevertheless consider that this is unfortunately not always possible in practice. Now, this being so, one is faced with the decision of whether, realising the position, one will compromise and rest satisfied with a two-fold moral code, or whether one is prepared to see the resulting conflict through, before God and by His grace, which is ours through Jesus Christ.

Where the Bible is used by members of the congregation, it is valued as a book dispensing comfort and laying down rules of conduct. Its Christological centre is seldom seen aright. The Bible plays a great part in providing a watchword as well as being an oracular book, which one approaches with the question: "What has God to say to me to-day?" Very different answers are given by individual members of the congregation with regard to their understanding of the Holy Scriptures; even where the Bible is regarded as the Word of God, it is looked upon more as a book dispensing comfort in sickness and in face of death, than as a model that commits one to a particular way of living. The Bible is commonly restricted when applied to one's private moral conduct; one fails to recognise the consequence of its having stood the test as regards our society and the ethics appertaining to our civilisation. As a rule the Bible is not regarded as a book for one's daily life. Only he who stands in a personal relationship to Christ tries to adopt in public life also a mode of behaviour in keeping with the Bible. For practical purposes, the circle is hence limited to the best members of the congregations, to the members of religious societies and sects.

Outside of this narrow circle, if questions are asked as to the authority of the Bible, it will be found that the respect in which the Bible is held is based, on the one hand, on its venerable old age, in that it already determined the life of one's forebears, and on the other hand, on the fact that it contains the Ten Commandments, and therefore from the basis of Christian upbringing. And that this upbringing is necessary is still widely stated by our middle-class moral precepts which, for the older generation, are far more of a guide than is the Bible itself. In this connection, it must indeed not be forgotten that these moral precepts have been influenced by the Bible in many ways and are in reality a secularised, further developed, and remodelled ethical code. Thus the Holy Scriptures are valid as a book of law rather than as a gospel, a succession to the freedom to which Christ calls us.

Still further outside this circle, among those who have now only a loose connection with the Church, we shall find, strangely enough, that here too the Bible is generally regarded with awe and is even referred to as the Word of God. But, in most cases, that to-day is nothing more than a traditional expression that does not obligate anyone to anything, not even to reading the Bible, let alone to following its teachings. People keep the Bible lying in their cupboards, or standing in their bookcases, because there is some kind of magic connected with it. From this position it is only a step to open superstition and misuse of the Bible. One has only to think of cases where the Bible is taken into the byre when there is sickness among the cattle, or where a pin is stuck into the Bible to find out the answer to definite questions as to the future. The one-sided use of the Apocalyptic passages from the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John are to be included in this respect.

Not until we go even further beyond this circle to those who, with their conception of the world, take up an atheistic position, do we come up against a decided rejection of the Holy Scriptures and a refusal to recognise any authority. To these people the Bible is an outmoded book and a weapon which capitalism uses to besot and exploit the working classes.

To large sections of our people, therefore, the Bible means very little or nothing. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by the fact that, even by those who stand apart, the Bible is referred to as the Word of God and a certain

authority is conferred upon it. This authority extends, of course, only to matters connected with the Church. It is small consolation to point out that of all ecclesiastical authorities, the Bible is at least the greatest. In cases where the Bible is admitted to be a guide for everyday life, people expect God to have some understanding for the fact that they cannot always—and not always want to—be guided by its word. In other words, they are not in earnest where the will of God is concerned. Only the small band of those for whom the Scriptures as the word of life strive to live according to the Bible, and that means heeding the Scriptures also in regard to one's profession and business and in public life. In terms of age, the position is that the older generation mainly take heed of the Bible, whilst those of middle age, conditioned by their upbringing in the Third Reich, have ceased to have any association with the Scriptures. In the case of the members of the "Junge Gemeinde", however, (the young confimed section of the parish) a deep interest is beginning to show itself once more, amazingly enough, although it is just these young people who have already gone through atheistic schooling.

Place and Use of the Bible in the U.S.A.

Carl W. Larson

The present situation

IN MANY OF THE CHURCH SCHOOLS in the U.S.A. and in all probability throughout the world, children attending these schools are taught to sing, "The Bible, the Bible, more precious than gold". One wonders if this high and holy thought really describes the use, application and investigation that many of the churches throughout the ages or the average lot of Christians have made of the Bible. One of the great voices of the Protestant Reformation urged with intense concern: "Were that this one Book in every language in every land, before the eyes, in the ears and hearts of men! Scripture without comment is the sun whence all teachers received their light". Someone has estimated that with all the advantages of the book-stores, the Bible Societies, denominational publishing houses and other stores in which Scriptures can be purchased in the U.S.A., one-third of the homes still do not possess this Book of Books. The Bible to-day undoubtedly remains the most purchased and least read book in the world by corresponding percentages.

In an "above the average" church in an Eastern city, U.S.A. less than 25 per cent. of the congregation attending morning worship on an average Sunday reads the Bible daily. Yet, to a Christian congregation its message should be their "meditation day and night". When a committee of a church asked a series of questions of why people rarely read the Bible, the first three out of thirty questions that were selected by more than half of the people answering these questions as reasons for this indifference were: 1. The Bible language was too difficult to understand; 2. Too busy—no time; 3. The lack of early training and background. Such answers appear to point to the fact that ineffective use of the Bible is made because of the strange, changing tempestuous world in which we live, or to a lack of personal discipline for things spiritual, or the church hasn't done its task sufficiently of teaching its fellowship to read, use, study and gain new insights into its truths.

It would appear that no investigation on any religious subject that has been conducted world-wide, bears as great a challenge to make both its findings

known, and to touch the concern of the Christian and the Church, as this Study. The task to present the Book and its message persuasively, so that it affects all of life for every man, is a challenge of the churches and Bible Societies.

Up to this time, the Study of the Place and Use of the Bible in the U.S.A. could have been better reported by Rev. E. H. Robertson, Study Secretary of U.B.S. It is to his credit that such a splendid introduction in the U.S.A. has begun. So far, 130 churches have agreed to participate in the Study. These churches, through their committees of the laity, have reported at least to the first case study document. The hopeful sign of this questionnaire method can be summarized by a minister who said, "The use of the Bible is one of the greatest stewardships that this church has to its own people. Now, since we have disposed of all our pious garments, where do we go from here?" And quite probably it could be added that no church has done as well in proceeding along a positive way of facing basic concerns of how a church can inspire a congregation to use the Bible and inspire its use in personal life, as this fellowship. It has determined to begin seriously to offer the opportunity to its members to several special hours of Bible study in which people can gain a new insight into the Book. These opportunities will be by congregate meetings at church or chapel and also Bible study meetings in the homes of parishioners. They will attempt to make the Book and the people "companions for life".

The participation of churches in the Study with complete honesty and an earnest desire to "see oneself" is a basic requirement. The fact that churches are both willing and anxious to put themselves under the microscope of Biblical use, may be credited to Departments of Evangelism and Christian Education which have continually revealed in the churches a lethargy in this task and have broken down defensive attitudes that they formerly had towards self-examinations. When a church gets a renewed concern and finds ways to put the 'whole orb Gospel' at the very center of the function and the message of the Church, you can observe a process beginning that affects the whole life of the membership.

Plans in the Study

As has been mentioned, 130 churches so far have agreed to be participants in the Study. It is planned that at least 250 churches will contribute in some degree to the findings during the succeeding period. These additional 120 churches will be chosen to illustrate a particular type of specialised ministry. These will include churches ministering to an industrial society, some that are located in an inter-racial situation, churches in declining rural communities, others that may be finding themselves in a complete intra-cultural situation, or churches that minister to a newly populated area, illustrated by a suburb in a far western city of 50,000 population and as yet only one voice of Evangelical Protestant Christianity. Briefly, how do these churches bring the Bible and put it to use in personal living in these living situations. Within many of the participating churches, one can readily see the value of personal groups within the church which develop leaders and inspire a continual growing in Christian living among its members. The personal discipline and complexion of these groups may differ in their aims, reason for existence, origin and conduct. But one common element is maintained by all. Each one depends upon the Bible and its study for its fellowship and development.

The second phase of the Study is to take place among a group of churches within a given community. In this situation, the individual church studies itself, while at the same time it looks at the collective influence that the churches

have upon the whole community, in bringing a relevant message of the Scriptures and inspiring deep Christian concerns for community needs and spiritual welfare. For instance, the 'inter-city church' in the U.S.A. of the 20th century will undoubtedly become one of the foremost concerns of nearly every denomination. However, it has already been learned that in these special cases, there is need to work with churches of all denominations who are located in the same general area. A church cannot face this task of study and strategy alone. By invitation of the Cincinnati Council of Churches, Cincinnati, Ohio, the first of such a group study is being conducted.

The third consideration of the Study may be better reported if phrased as questions. Within an area of the State of Ohio, 41,223 square miles, with a population of 9,096,000 (est. 1956) where there are more than one hundred religious denominations, with an active State Council of Churches, a state which is twenty-seven per cent. Protestant, eighteen per cent. Catholic, five per cent. Jewish and the other more than fifty per cent. unchurched, what is the Place and Use of the Bible within this commonwealth? In these changing times, when a farmer suddenly becomes an urbanite without leaving his home, or a miner becomes a factory worker, we can ask, how can the Bible and its use bring stability, a new relevance, and bring him spiritually into a new community of people?

One of the states selected now conducts an excellent four-day school to which ministers from rural and small communities are invited. These pastors serve one to four churches. Many have not had a formal theological education and some do not have an academic diploma. These men are given a concentrated seminar. The subjects discussed are preaching, the use of the Bible, the changing times in which we live and practical helps in the ministry. Each presentation in the school is an attempt to bring a relevance of the Bible message to the needs of the community in which the pastor serves. It is planned that three states will form the basis of such a study.

In the near future, it is a great hope that from some Christian community in the U.S.A. might come a report of a "Bible-Week" as has been experienced in Germany, Scotland, England and elsewhere. This will inspire a new fellowship within the Christian community and the deep concern of what does God say *to us* here at home *through the Bible.*

Observations

Generally speaking, the Bible still holds the honoured place among the fellowship of Christians. A quick glance at some of the answers brings a few quick observations:

—the majority of people answering the questionnaires feel that the Bible is the Book for daily life for all members of the human family, and not only a Book of authority.

—fifty per cent. of the people in the churches read the Bible infrequently (25% daily as earlier stated).

—about 75 per cent. of the people answering the questionnaire are quite happy about the fellowship that they experience within the churches.

—a little more than half the people attributed the training in the use of the Bible to the Church School.

—as many people read the Revised Standard Version as King James and about ten per cent. read Phillips and other editions.

—the majority of persons contacted through the Study feel that the New Testament and Psalms are most helpful in settling matters of faith and practice.

—where there may be denominations who do not have well defined doctrinal statements, ministers frequently urge their people "not to use key verses of the Bible to support a special doctrine".

There are great concerns that seem to come to the surface from such a study that disturb any complacency that the churches might have, even though "they never had it so good". But when these concerns are met by the churches themselves, and when denominational leaders endorse a study to penetrate their own churches to find reasons and causes for these things, and then pray and hope for a way to remedy the situation *by always turning to the bible*, one learns anew, This Book—the Bible, lives to-day!

Canadian Churches in Search of Bible Treasure

Francis E. Vipond

How the project was set up

In the year 1954, the year in which we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the organization of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Canadian Council of Churches issued a recall "to a more faithful use and study of the Holy Bible". In the month of May in that year a Committee on the Use and Understanding of the Bible was appointed. The Committee concentrated on introducing a project whereby a wider use and deeper understanding of the Scriptures might be stimulated. Three Pilot Workshops in 1956 and 1957 helped to lay the foundation and when sufficient funds became available from royalties on the Revised Standard Version of the Bible a Director was appointed in 1958 and a three-year project undertaken. The task of the director is to interpret the purpose of the project to groups of churchmen, ministerial and lay, across Canada and to assist leaders of Bible Study by encouraging Workshops wherein the rich treasure of the Bible may be discovered through the use of effective methods. The director will also call attention to available resources for Bible study such as books, commentaries, films and other resources.

A committee of fourteen people representative of member churches in the Canadian Council of Churches assist the director in charting the course which the project shall take. Rev. Frank P. Fidler is the chairman of the committee and Rev. Kenneth S. Wills is the Secretary of the Department of Christian Education of the Canadian Council of Churches under whose auspices the project has been undertaken.

Training of Bible Study leaders

This important enterprise is planned to assist leaders in local churches to study and appreciate the rich content of the Bible, and to learn methods which will be most effective in helping others to see that the Bible meets their need. In workshops which have been and are to be set up the objective will be to train Bible study leaders in methods which will assist in making the Bible live in

home, church and everywhere. The workshops are designed in accordance with the principle that we learn best by being involved in a process of research. It has been estimated that "people learn and retain about 35% of what they hear, 55% of what they see and roughly 75% of what they are involved in". Leaders will be encouraged to examine Bible passages thoroughly to discover what God is saying through those passages, to learn the history of Bible times and of the formation of the Bible and to gain some proficiency in the use of such tools for Bible study as commentaries, maps and books. To the workshops men and women, ministerial and lay, will be invited. We would like to have representative leaders from groups of youth, young adults, Sunday School and Mid-Week group leaders and leaders of men's and women's groups. Workshops may be held on 3, 4 or 5 consecutive evenings plus the whole Saturday, or during a week-end from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon or evening, or during six full days of the week.

An encouraging response

I am happy to say that there is a warm response in our Council's project. People welcome guidance in finding the treasure which is in the Bible. I was greatly enheartened when, having spoken in a church in a western Ontario town on a Sunday evening, and having invited the congregation to remain after the service for a period of Bible study, to find that about fifty people stayed and were obviously greatly interested and involved in a study of seven parables of Jesus in small groups. The climate is indeed favourable for pursuing our undertaking. This does not mean that we shall not have to put forth well planned effort to pursuade people that they have time for Bible study. There are many diversions which hinder people from becoming deeply interested in a study of the Bible. We shall have to convince our people that the Bible deals with the real problems and the real desires of real people and we shall have to encourage our members to read the Bible in the clearest translation. This can be done if, with imagination and genuine appreciation of the Bible on our own part, we set ourselves to the task.

Already in Canada we have had two Bible study leaders' workshops, one for young people in Winnipeg and a general workshop for leaders of all church groups in Vancouver. The director has been making contact with various people in the ranks of church leadership and has been pleased to be associated with committees in seven cities in Western Canada in planning workshops for the months of September, October and November. In the month of September I plan to visit the Provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and to meet with a committee in the city of Montreal, Quebec.

It has been a genuine pleasure to meet Rev. Edwin Robertson who was appointed three years ago to be the Study Secretary for the United Bible Societies, the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. Mr. Robertson is engaged in a study on the Place and Use of the Bible in the Living Situation of the Churches throughout the World. I have been greatly interested in reading some of the documents which he has written, and in learning from them something concerning the ways in which the Bible is being used in other parts of the world, particularly western Europe. At a meeting which we had with Mr. Robertson in Cincinatti, Ohio, in the month of March of this year, Rev. Carl Larson, Study Director on the Place and Use of the Bible in the United States of America and myself received a lift as we sat with Mr. Robertson, sharing fellowship with him and gaining confidence in the discharge of our own responsibilities as we learned from him.

While we were in Cincinatti, we decided to confer with church leaders in Buffalo, New York, in the hope that we might hold a "Bible Week" in that city at some future date. We decided on Buffalo because it is so close to Canada, and, therefore would be a strategic centre from which the stimulus of that week of Bible study would reach into both Canada and the United States. We felt that a Bible Week in Buffalo would bring our study project to the attention of both countries in a vivid way. Carl Larson took on the responsibility of initiating discussion with the Buffalo church leaders and with the assistance of the Secretary of the American Bible Society in Syracuse, New York, a beginning has been made.

I look forward to the days that lie ahead and hope that, as the result of our combined efforts, all of us will be stimulated to search the Scriptures, in the confidence that we have in them the thrilling record of God's redemptive concern for each of us—a concern which gives a needy people guidance and hope.

The Use of the Bible in Indonesia

J. Koper

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: *It should be kept in mind that what is dealt with here mainly concerns the use of the Bible in the Indonesian churches which are members of the Indonesian Christian Council. Certainly much use is also made of the Bible within other groups. But these are much smaller and data about them are difficult to obtain.*)

THE TOTAL NUMBER of Protestant Christians in Indonesia amounts to approximately 3 millions, divided among 30 different churches. The members of these churches make use of the Bible in Indonesian, and besides that, of a complete or partial translation in local vernacular.

As a rule we can say that in Indonesia the Bible is used in a traditional way. This means: in church services and other congregational meetings; in the services in the homes of the people; in Bible-study groups; in religious education; at sick-beds and funerals. Although in this way undoubtedly the Bible is used in a traditional and sometimes even formalistic manner, its significance should not be underrated. For it proves the fact that the Bible has its unquestionable place in the life of the Christian congregation. The Christian churches in Indonesia are unthinkable without the Bible.

However, on the other hand it must be stated that among the Christians the personal reading of the Bible and the use of the Bible in family-life is hardly practised at all. Perhaps this can be explained sociologically: one of the strong points of Christianity in Indonesia is that people are Christians as members of a certain community. The main point of confessing the Christian faith and practising Christian piety is not primarily to be found on a personal or individual level, but within the body of the Christian community. This counts especially within the grouping of the several Indonesian churches, all of which show strong ethnic ties. It is not impossible that this strong, non-personal or non-individualistic, peculiarity of Indonesian Christianity is the cause of the poor

personal reading and study of the Bible. This certainly means a shortcoming, for the result is that knowledge of the Bible amongst Christians is far too weak. It is not sufficient only to hear Bible-readings once or twice a week.

Beside this shortcoming, we sometimes hear remarkable examples of Bible-reading by non-Christians, or Christians who have moved away from their original church-areas, such as students. These two groups belong to the better-trained, more-educated people. It quite often happens that non-Christians come to buy a Bible. When the Bible-seller has a talk with these purchasers, it often appears that they want a Bible in order to become better acquainted with Christianity. Or to be able to join discussion groups, for instance between Moslems and Christians. Or to be able to find ways and means of reconverting their brothers who have become Christians.

It does not need to be stressed that, as everywhere in the world, in Indonesia too, the Bible is often used in an animistic way, i.e. as an amulet or charm. A Bible-colporteur reports that during the recent civil war in Celebes some people, Christians and non-Christians, used to carry along a Bible or a New Testament, wrapped up in a red cloth, to defend them against bullets. For the same purpose sometimes rosaries were used, so the Bible had to share the honour of being a strong amulet with a Roman rosary . . . . .!

This short survey might give some directives for the stimulating of the right use of the Bible by the Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia (the Indonesian Bible Society). What is mentioned next is partly in process of realisation, partly it indicates directions for the work of the Indonesian Bible Society during the coming years. Perhaps it is superfluous to state, that the use of the Bible is not to be stimulated only in order to sell more Bibles, but in order that the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be preached to the world.

Preaching the Gospel, even if carried out by means of spreading the Bible, is primarily a task of the churches. To try and intensify the use of the Bible—again with the intention of preaching the Gospel—has therefore to be done in close co-operation with the churches. As stated above, in Indonesia this means that the traditional and formalistic use of the Bible has to be overcome and the knowledge of the Bible has to be deepened.

The Indonesian Bible Society started on this task during 1958, in the East Java Church. This church, with its about 70,000 members, living amidst 11 million Moslems, and born out of a group of "Bible-readers" about 100 years ago, certainly offers suitable possibilities for research in finding new ways and means for stimulating the use of the Bible. During five days ministers, colporteurs and laymen met together in conference with the Secretaries of the L.A.I. to study the problem of the right use of the Bible. Some remarkable facts were revealed: the older church members do not have the best knowledge of the Bible, nor are they the most willing buyers of the Bible; among many non-Christians in Eastern Java there is the conviction that Chrsitianity is a Western-colonial religion; others hold the view that all religions are the same, and that therefore it is no use changing your religion, for instance, in order to become a Christian. Other non-Christians again find the Bible a "kitab kering", a "dry book", because it must only contain "dry" laws and religious regulations.

This conference of 1958 was to be followed by an evangelisation campaign and Bible week, in August/September of this year to be organised by the East Java Church in co-operation with the Bible Society.

In the meantime a questionnaire concerning the use of the Bible was sent out by the L.A.I. at the instigation of the UNITED BIBLR SOCIETIES Study Secretary to all the churches in Indonesia which are members of the Indonesian Christian Council. Ten months afterwards only one or two answers had been received. This delay can partly be explained as a result of the prevailing situation in Indonesia with its difficulties in the interinsular communications. But mainly we will have to conclude that the churches are not sufficiently aware of the importance of the problems concerning the spreading and the use of the Bible. Conversely it seems that the central organisations are not attending adequately to the problems of the periphery or are not able to do so. The churches are simply not up to the questions which are being put and must be put centrally. It is not sufficient to organise all kinds of conferences in central places, be they very important in themselves, where the churches can only send one or two delegates, and the most distant churches nobody at all, notwithstanding those are the biggest churches in Indonesia. The churches themselves have to be worked on intensively and for that matter central questionnaires and findings are insufficient.

Therefore the problem of the use of the Bible in the churches in Indonesia is for the greater part also a problem of the lack of a living contact with other churches and central organisations. Eventually this does not only count for the use of the Bible.

If it is right to put the problem of the use of the Bible within the churches as a problem of a close, active and positive co-operation between the Bible Society on one side and the different churches on the other, the same could be said about the other questions mentioned above. In co-operation with the churches the Bible Society will have to prepare materials concerning the Bible, both introductory and explanatory, especially for non-Christians who want to buy a Bible. In co-operation with Christian student organisations and other Christian youth movements, all kinds of biblical material should be made available for university and high school students, Christian as well as non-Christian. The more educated Christian youth who have often grown up with the Bible in their own vernacular, will certainly switch to the Indonesian translation afterwards. In view of these facts the necessity of a new modern translation of the Bible in Indonesian become still more urgent. The work on this translation is being carried on rapidly now. Keeping in mind the possibilities of evangelisation among the last mentioned groups it is not excessive to think of editing Bibles with explanatory notes, or of special explanations of certain Bible books, although this is in contradiction to the original motives of the Bible Societies.

In short, it is clear, that around the question of the use of the Bible in Indonesia there is still a lot of work to be done.

The Bible and the Asian Church

S. J. de S. Weerasinghe

IT IS CUSTOMARY at Bible Society conferences to make an appraisal of past achievements by presenting impressive statistics regarding Scripture circulation during the period under review. When we hear that in December, 1958, the B.F.B.S. produced its one hundred millionth complete Bible and that since its foundation in 1804, the Society has produced 100,005,685 Bibles, 133,175,701 New Testaments and 349,792,104 Portions, totalling nearly 583,000,000 copies of the Scriptures we are dealing with figures which paralyse our imagination. It is now reckoned that all the Bible Societies of the world together produce something like twenty-five million copies of the Scriptures in one year. These statistics are impressive indeed and show us the magnitude of the task that is undertaken by the Bible Societies.

In this context we are bound to ask some fundamental questions: (1) What happens to this enormous quantity of Scripture which is produced and circulated? (2) How many people read what is distributed? (3) How many of those who read the Scriptures understand them? (4) How many of those who read and understand them find them relevant to their life in the modern world?

These questions demand an answer because the Bible Societies can never be content with merely circulating so many copies of the Scriptures; they must proceed to ask themselves what they are doing to achieve the ultimate aim of Scripture distribution. That ultimate aim is expressed in the classic words of St. John's Gospel: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name". (Ch.20:31). We know however, that at this point the achievement of the ultimate aim of Scripture distribution must pass out of the hands of the Bible Society and become the responsibility of the living and witnessing Church. But it is quite clear that the Bible Society must continue to be interested in the second stage, although the primary responsibility will have to rest on the Church.

In this connection it is extremely gratifying to note that the U.B.S. has taken the initiative in launching a study project on the place and use of the Bible in the living situation of the Church. The projected survey and the study which is related to it should, in due course, produce results that will make the churches realise to what extent the Bible is used or not used in different parts of the world. This brief article is written from the perspective of the Asian Church which finds herself in a new situation. The Church in Asia, it must be admitted, may not be fundamentally different from the Church in other parts of the world, but it is true that it has to face new and peculiar problems of its own. A great deal of what is said here, however, will be equally applicable to the Church in other areas.

As no comprehensive survey has been made yet of the Asian Church, in regard to the place and use of the Bible, all that can be done in this article is to examine the place the Bible *ought* to occupy in the life and witness of the Church. Without making very precise definitions of terms, one might venture to list different

spheres in which the Bible can operate creatively. It will be seen that the items on the following list do overlap and could be re-grouped differently. But they serve to indicate something of the wide variety of situations in which the Bible must play its creative and redemptive part in our Asian setting:

1. *The Liturgy of the Church* (a) Forms of corporate worship (b) Prayer life of the Church (c) Devotional life of the individual (d) Family altar in Christian homes.

2. *The preaching ministry of the Church* (a) The need for expository preaching (b) Correcting and combating heresy and Christian deviations (c) Showing the relevance of the Christian faith to new demands in Asia.

3. *The Teaching Ministry of the Church* (a) Theological formulation of the faith (b) Restatement of the message of the Gospel to meet the new age in Asia (c) The task of drawing out the existential implications of Christianity to meet the challenge of social and political problems (d) The strengthening of the spiritual life and stature of Church members (e) Instructing the young in Christian citizenship.

4. *The task of meeting the challenge of modern rival faiths to Christianity* (a) Nationalism (b) Humanism (c) Communism (d) Secularism.

5. *The preparation of Christian apologetics* (a) Restatement of the faith for educated groups of non-Christians (b) Rethinking of theology in the context of resurgent non-Christian faiths (c) Propagandist literature for the secularised modern man (d) Literature for the missionary task of the Church.

This list does not claim to be exhaustive, but it indicates fairly fully the range of the Church's life and witness in which the Bible has to play a vital part. When we study the Bible itself, with all the help that is now available from biblical scholarship, giving us historical and literary background of the various books, we find that the books of the Bible have been written and used to meet the range of needs reflected in the above list.

A New Testament scholar comes to the conclusion that "the key to the understanding of the New Testament Documents is that they are the propagandist literature of a widespread and successful missionary movement."*

In this missionary movement there was the need to preach, to combat heresy and error, to use question and answer technique (catacetical method), to preserve liturgical forms which could be easily memorized and to leave formulations of faith to be learnt by heart from the missionaries before they left. As the New Testament documents include all these elements, these writings enter into creative contact with the living Church in Asia to-day in her own missionary task. Challenged by resurgent faiths around her, she has to restate the Christian Gospel as was done by the writer of the fourth Gospel. The Asian Church must also face the challenge of a technological civilization which is invading these lands and therefore she must learn to relate the ageless Gospel to social and political needs of to-day. The Church has to discover that while the Bible has no ready-made answers to our social, political and cultural problems, it has resources which are more adequate to meet these demands than any other faith.

*A Fresh Approach to the New Testament by H. G. G. Herklots. Page 53.

We need, therefore, to know our Bible. We need to memorize vital passages of Scripture like our friends in the Buddhist and Hindu traditions. We need to discover the contemporary relevance of the message of the Bible. We can do all these because of a great conviction which we share with others in the Church Universal. Dr. C. H. Dodd has given memorable expression to that conviction in these words:—"It is not in the nature of an historical religion to be static, and the 'faith once delivered' has actually grown and developed as any faith which springs out of life and experience in a changing world must develop. Catholic Christianity has its organs for recording and formulating such development, in spite of its traditional conservatism. On the other hand it was a representative of a type of Protestantism most rigorous in its appeal to the Scriptures who declared, 'The Lord hath more light and truth yet to break forth out of His holy word'. If the Bible is indeed 'the Word of God', it is not as the 'last word' on all religious questions, but as the 'seminal word' out of which new apprehension of truth springs in the mind of man".

I think that enough has been said to underline the importance of the Study which the U.B.S. has initiated and may I express the hope that the Church in Asia may be fully alive to its need.

The Place and Use of the Bible in Brazil

Oliver K. K. Nelson

"POLICE OFFICER, PEDRO, we have heard that you are never armed and that when your chief suggests that you carry a gun, you always request that you be permitted to dispense with it".

Pedro Frederico Soares, a police officer of Rio de Janeiro, and a member of the Baptist Church of Neves was being interviewed on the Brazilian television program, "This is Your Life". "That is true", answered Pedro. "Why, Pedro?" asked the announcer. "Because I already have a weapon from which nothing will separate me". "What weapon is that?" Pedro took a copy of the Holy Scriptures from his pocket and showed it to the television audience, saying, "The Bible, which is the Word of God".

The preliminary study of the use of the Bible in Brazil shows that the "believers", as the evangelical Christians are often called, do use their Bibles, believe that it is the Word of God, find it indispensable in their missionary and evangelistic activities, and endeavour to guide their lives according to its teachings.

Some special characteristics of Brazil

Brazil is larger than the United States if we exclude Alaska and Hawaii. Most of its 60,000,000 people live near the sea on the East coast and in the more advanced southern states. Penetration into the interior is progressing. There are cities in the interior separated by vast distances, some only practicably accessible by air. The population is growing at the rate of 1,000,000 per year. There is considerable moving about, especially from the north toward the large centers, and to the new cities developing along the march of westward expansion.

There are about 5,000 evangelical churches in Brazil. If we add to this the unorganized congregations and preaching points, we may count on about 10,000 places in which the Bible is regularly studied.

Many of the churches in Brazil developed from Bible study groups sponsored by an organized church. These groups are usually led by laymen, and it is quite common for a church to sponsor several. These develop into preaching points, congregations and eventually into organized churches. One church in Nilopolis celebrated its fifteenth anniversary by organizing its tenth daughter church.

Although there are evangelical denominations which have been in existence in Brazil for more than 100 years, and there are many third generation evangelical Christians, the large proportion of "believers" are first generation Christians, many of them quite new Christians, with the zeal and enthusiasm commonly found among the recently converted.

Because of its size, and the vast distances to be covered, much of the evangelization of Brazil has been done through Scripture distribution ahead of the missionary contact. There are some instances of individuals having been converted and churches established through the simple reading of the Word. In the State of Piaui, a Bible was found floating in the river, just below a town. It was rescued, read, and people became interested in the Gospel, so that when the first missionary came, there were people practically ready for church membership. A church was formed through the finding of this Bible. In another city, a few pages of the Gospel of John, rescued from a fire were sufficient to arouse the interest of some who, after seeking further knowledge, founded a church. The Bible colporteurs went ahead of the missionaries, and in many places opened the first breach in the wall of ignorance.

The physical and economic characteristics of Brazil, and the way in which the evangelical movement was developed, appear to have resulted in a general pattern with respect to the use of the Bible which seems to run throughout the different denominations. Some habits of worship have developed which differ from the usages in the churches of the United States and of Europe. One striking difference is the greater emphasis on the Sunday School program.

Bible use in Church life.

"Are you going to attend the worship service in Ipanema this morning?" Senhorita Alice Vicente de Oliveira looked up surprised. "Why no. We only have a worship service in the evening. In the morning we have Sunday School".

The custom of using the entire Sunday morning for Sunday School with emphasis on Bible study, and having the preaching service only in the evening is quite common in Brazil. It arose from the lack of pastors, many of whom had to take care of several churches. Preaching services were therefore held only in the evening, the service on Sunday morning being entirely set aside for Bible study classes. Even after a church grew to the point where it could afford to support a resident pastor, the habit of having two hours of Sunday School and Bible study on Sunday mornings was continued, with both adults and children of the church attending.

Bible contests are popular in Sunday Schools in Brazil. The whole congregation joins in competition to see who can find most quickly a certain Bible verse, or the location of a Bible character or scene.

Sunday School records usually include the number of Bibles present. When the count is called, the people, young and old, proudly hold up their Bibles. Each member of the family is encouraged to own his own Bible and bring it to church.

Each church member is expected to own a Bible. The pastor usually keeps a supply on hand and sells or gives one to each new member. Prospects are also invited to buy a Bible, and the pastor provides special Bible study for prospects.

The pastors exhort their people to study their Bibles and to bring them to church. Most services include responsive readings from the Bible. Sermons are based on Bible texts, chosen from Scripture passages read from the pulpit.

At the mid-week evening services a period of Bible study, with opportunity for questions is given, led by the pastor. Young peoples' groups, women's organizations and men's groups also often meet an hour before the Sunday evening services for Bible study. In these meetings Bible contests are popular, as well as question periods. Even in social gatherings sponsored by the church organizations, a time is reserved for Bible study, Bible contests and Bible games.

One interesting claim made by Brazilian Christians is that when the pastor visits his members he always has a period for Bible reading, and uses the Bible belonging to the family visited. Thus each family is expected to have a Bible available for reading when the pastor calls.

On one occasion a pastor visited a couple who had been married for about three months. When he called for their Bible they sheepishly admitted that neither had one. The pastor was shocked. "You have furniture", he said "and cups and saucers and other necessities. How is it possible that you don't have a Bible?"

Scripture distribution campaigns

It is common among Brazilian churches to include scripture distribution as one of the activities of the church. During revival campaigns, church workers go from house to house inviting people to the services, and either giving or selling a Scripture portion. The First Baptist Church of Rio de Janeiro is at present conducting a thorough survey of its area, house to house, speaking to the inhabitants individually. At each home an envelope containing an Illustrated Gospel is left. Careful records are kept of every contact made.

The colportage secretary of the Bible Society of Brazil, trained at the Penzotti Institute, plans Scripture distribution campaigns for churches and groups of churches. These campaigns have as their aim not only to distribute Scriptures, but also to encourage and train the people, through conversation and leaflets, to make proper daily use of the Bible. In the preliminary discussions with pastors and workers one of the purposes stressed is "to stimulate the better and greater use of the Scriptures".

Other organizations, some of them sponsored by groups in the United States, are engaged in Scripture distribution. These find that they got the best results if they work through the Brazilian churches in campaigns carefully planned, so that Scriptures are delivered to those who want them and will use them. One group distributes Gospels in connection with a correspondence Bible study course. One missionary advertises in the Sunday supplement of a newspaper offering a Gospel to anyone who writes in, with good results.

Effects of the use of the Bible

It was pay-day at the steel mill in Volta Redonda. "Look here", said one employee, "You've got to be credited with overtime." "I didn't put in any overtime". The cashier looked nervous. "Go ahead and take it. You'll just cause trouble if you don't". The employee refused. The manager overheard the discussion. "What's all this about?" he asked. His investigation showed that the time-keeper had been crediting overtime to a number of employees, in return for "kick-backs". The time-keeper was discharged, and the honest employee was promoted. This employee was a "believer", who brought his Bible to the mill each day and read it during his lunch hour.

"I am enthusiastic about the Bible as a Book to be used", said a Brazilian Methodist pastor. "I was saved through reading it".

Pastors interviewed generally agreed that the Bible study helped the spiritual life of the church and its members, encouraged tithing, developed character, raised standards of morality and improved personal relationships among members and with outsiders.

One employer stated that although he was not a believer, all his key men were evangelical Christians. He said that where he had the choice, he preferred to deal with a believer.

One of the most publicized conversions last year was that of Brazil's public enemy No. 1, "Seven Fingers", now serving a sentence in the penitentiary. "Seven Fingers" holds Bible study sessions in the penitentiary where he has been made a trusty in recognition of his changed attitude.

An employee of the Bible Society of Brazil, a woman, gets up early every morning for an hour of Bible study. She conducts services on Sundays in the women's penitentiary, with the result that some of the women are studying the Bible, and there have been a number of conversions.

Bible publicity in Brazil

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path". A man came into the office of the General Secretary of the Bible Society of Brazil reciting the above verse. He had never read a Bible, nor had he seen one, and had never been in a church. He had learned Scripture passages by listening to the Radio Clock, a program in Rio de Janeiro which gives the time of day, with short advertising scripts interjected. The Bible Society of Brazil through this medium distributes 144 Scripture passages daily, also giving the name and address of the Society.

The Bible has received considerable advertising in the secular newspapers. During the first six months of 1959, more than one hundred and thirty-six separate articles have appeared, all referring to the Bible. The Bible Contest, won by a teacher in the Adventist Church, Sr. Silva, was given wide publicity. She appeared on television and on radio broadcasts as the winner of a free trip to the Holy Land because of her knowledge of the Bible.

One of the larger denominations conducts the Bible School of the Air, a Bible Study program which has been going out over many of the radio stations of Brazil for nine years. Interest in this program has been constantly growing.

A franciscan friar has established a Bible Center in the City of Sao Paulo. This center conducts a correspondence course with about three thousand participants. The friar also initiated a Bible Week in which special services are held, speeches are made in many churches and on the radio with an evening session for the public, all dealing with the Bible. "The Bible Hour" is also sponsored, being a radio program with questions and answers concerning the Bible, heard every Sunday at 17.30, also including round table discussions. This Bible Center is also connected with the League for Bible Study, made up of a group of priests dedicated to the study and distribution of the Bible. Each month these Roman Catholic priests meet to discuss the Bible and better methods of distribution. They also publish a magazine called the Review of Bible Culture. They claim that it has resulted in reducing prejudice against the Catholic Church on the part of Protestants.

Some preliminary deductions

The study of the place and use of the Bible in Brazil has been carried on in its preliminary stages through questionnaires, discussions with pastors and laymen, and personal observation. Certain basic facts appear evident from the study thus far. The Christians in Brazil are enthusiastic, zealous and evangelistic. They are conservative in their theology. They believe the Bible to be the Word of God, that it is the guide for their lives and for their public and private conduct. The churches use the Bible extensively in their services, are guided by it in their church affairs. The pastors encourage their members to study it, base their sermons on it, use it, in visitation and in contacts with prospects, and encourage its distribution. The Bible and Bible study appear to be basic in the lives of the churches and the evangelical Christians in Brazil.

The Yeovil Experiment

D. Brown

THE IDEA TOOK ROOT in Yeovil in the joint Clergy and Ministers' Fraternal which meets only for eight months in the year, and is usually well attended. I had received a copy of E. H. Robertson's account of Bible Study in Europe. The opportunity of bringing it to the notice of the fraternal came immediately after Mr. Robertson's broadcast from the local Baptist Church in February, 1958, when much was said in appreciation of the service and sermon. Mentioning that I had the above report, and that I would like to give the gist of it at some future meeting, it was agreed that I should do it at the next one. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, it turned out to be one of those rare occasions when more than half the members were prevented from being present. After hearing what I had to say the meeting decided that each leading ordained representative of the major Christian denominations in the town should be provided with a copy of the document, and asked to give his views on it in not more than 5 minutes at the next fraternal.

In his statement the Methodist Superintendent said that he would welcome some joint effort in the town, supported by all the churchcs, in which we could study the Bible together for a week. This suggestion found an immediate response, and culminated in Mr. Robertson being asked to talk to the fraternal about a possible week of joint Bible study. He gladly accepted the invitation,

giving a date in July when he could come to Yeovil. At that meeting we were able to fix the four dates in December for the joint effort, and a day in September when two members of the fraternal would give a précis of all the commentaries they had been able to read on the selected passages of Scripture. This was to be the introduction of the discussion by the fraternal on these passages, and to their application to local conditions.

After this September meeting there followed the many talks of preparation, to which all the Clergy and Ministers involved gave themselves freely. Extra fraternal meetings throbbed with the discussion of the necessary details of the experiment and in them they felt drawn still closer together in pursuit of their common task.

Two items, about which there was a good deal of discussion, stand out in my mind. They were publicity, and the public reading of the selected passages of Scripture in the Parish Church before they were expounded. To each item there was given the same earnest thought and consideration.

For the publicity we found encouraging support amongst the business people of the town. Four of the main shops were prepared to give space in their windows for a fortnight, that is the week before the event, and the week during the event, even though it was so near Christmas. One window was most outstanding. With a background of red velvet, supplied by the shop, a replica of the Coronation Bible stood in the centre. Around were posters and cards advertising the meetings.

On the Sundays preceding the Bible Study week the Clergy and Ministers preached on the selected Scripture passages to their own congregations.

The night of the first meeting in December was a memorable one. Half an hour before it was due to begin in the Parish Church, the members of the fraternal met in the choir vestry to robe. They were joined by the Bishop of Taunton, who had agreed to open the 'experiment', and give it his blessing. The Rev. Elsie Chamberlain of the B.B.C. was also there. She was in Yeovil not merely to supervise the "Lift Up Your Hearts" broadcasts by one of the local clergy or ministers and a layman each morning on what had been said and discussed the previous evening, but also because she was deeply interested in the experiment. And Miss Diana Reader Harris, the Headmistress of Sherborne School for Girls, joined us. She had been asked to read the selected passage of Scripture. There was a subdued excitement in the air.

Not the most optimistic supporter could have been prepared to see so many people gathered together in the Parish Church for the occasion; nor in St. John's Schoolroom immediately afterwards for the discussion that was to follow the exposition of the Scripture passage that had been given in the church. Nor was the stimulating attendance of the first night just 'a flash in the pan'. In spite of inclement weather the numbers were almost the same for the second and third nights, and the last night was better than the first. The meetings began on a very high note and proceeded very smoothly. All who attended—and almost all the Christian Communions were present—were deeply impressed.

The 'follow up', for which there was a unanimous desire, was on January 25th, 1959. The 7th Chapter of Romans, the passage selected for the occasion, having been studied and discussed in the fraternal, was preached upon by the

clergy and ministers in their various churches. Some 200 people from these churches met at 8 p.m. in St. John's Schoolroom. Naturally the discussion, which never flagged, revolved round the beginning of the Christian life. An attempt to raise the question of pacifism was firmly resisted by the chair.

On May 10th there was a further 'follow up', when the theme chosen was the Ascension. On the previous Monday the clergy and ministers met from 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., with a short break for lunch, to hear a paper on the subject given by one of the members, and for discussion. This was the lead they followed in preaching to their own congregations on the Sunday evening. Again there was a full house in St. John's Schoolroom for the united meeting at 8 p.m.

The discussion, however, was not so lively. Maybe it was a difficult subject. The clergy and the ministers had found in the fraternal that it is not the easiest topic for public discussion. Or may be it was the feeling in the minds of many who have made up the audience on each occasion that we ought to be taking the next step forward. But there is no clear idea when the next step should be.

The lay people suggested that there ought to be a lay fraternal run on parallel lines to the clergy and ministers fraternal. Churches were asked to send two representatives to a meeting to form such a fraternal. In this meeting questions were asked on the kind of programme such a fraternal would pursue. "What can they do that is not already being done by some existing Christian body", it was asked? A suggestion was then made that this fraternal should meet with the clergy and ministers fraternal. But the time at which both can meet together is not easy to arrange. Yet this group of lay people felt they wanted more than another prayer and Bible study meeting. They wanted some practical expression to be the result of their joint Bible study. After much discussion there has now been formed a Christian Council of Churches with the Principal of the Technical School as Chairman, and the Curate of Holy Trinity, who is the secretary of the clergy and ministers fraternal, as secretary.

May it not be that we are asking too much at this stage of the experiment? May it not be that as members of various churches we have still a good deal to learn about, and from, each other? And that to meet one Sunday evening, once a quarter, may have a good deal to teach us? To have met together in this way, through this experiment, was an outstanding achievement. Perhaps after another week of Bible study together, say in 1961, we may find then what the next step forward may be.

The 1959 Kirchentag in Münich

Hans Hölzel

WRITING THESE LINES just after this year's Kirchentag, held in Münich, I still feel profoundly moved by the extraordinary experience of the vast mass gathering which formed the impressive conclusion.

Indeed, the whole Kirchentag was a time of harvest. All through the year we could see the corn growing, the true core of which was the coming together around the Bible, the serious study of the Bible. People did not come to those gatherings unprepared. All those from our parishes who were planning to attend, concentrated prayerfully on the study of the Bible themes in their youth groups, Mother's Unions, Men's Groups. To help them in this they had the well-prepared booklet issued last year by the Kirchentag organisation. Thus in many of our congregations we saw a new beginning of purposeful house-churches and neighbourhood groups.

This deep and personal preparation, however, was shared by many who could not expect or hope to take part in the gathering itself. Many also who had stood aside sceptically also began to feel stimulated as the weeks and months went by. Because of all this preparatory work one could find among most people a deep committed readiness for and open-mindedness to the message and teaching which was to be conveyed by the Kirchentag itself. Most people could then choose, according to their condition, age or interest, the working group whose discussions they wanted to share in.

As usual, the Bible study occupied a privileged position in the Kirchentag. We shall limit the rest of these notes to that aspect only of the Kirchentag, although many other features would be worth consideration too.

It was an impressive sight to meet in the huge tents those masses of people, the Bible in their hands, their notebooks open, listening with great expectation to the exposition of the Bible study leaders. (All subjects for study, it will be remembered, had been prepared in a working session lasting several days.) Forty-thousand people sitting in eleven different groups, unanimously concentrating their full attention on what God was about to tell them through His Word. This year, three main themes were chosen: The Lord, founder of the Church (Deut. 7: 6-11); Thus hath the Lord ordained His people (John 15: 1-17); For this purpose has He sent His people (John 15: 18-27).

A *direct effect* of this study of the Scripture could be felt in the sense of discovering oneself in living unity with others in the communion services, at the morning watches and in the prayer meetings. It was also after the study of the Bible that many found the time and courage and felt the call to seek pastoral counsel and even individual confession. Bible study also helped towards a deeper spiritual understanding of the great works of Church music which were

performed some evenings and of the various serious religious plays which were to be seen. In this setting, even the readings of religious poetry by people like R. A. Schröder or M. Hausmann gained a new meaning and a new attractiveness.

An *indirect effect* of the study of the Bible was also evident in many conversations with church members of one's own congregation or even fully unknown persons. This was the repeated statement: indeed, something must change. This was but the first, yet true sign, I am convinced, of a genuine conversion, of a forthcoming return home to the vows pronounced at the time of baptism and since forgotten. Such occasions as the Kirchentage are also, undoubtedly, first-class schools for training in independent reflection and in Bible reading.

If we try to think what the visitors may have taken with them from the Kirchentag with regard to the future, here too our expectations are great. They take back with them the potentiality of a true, lasting revival of our churches, church groups, church services and Bible study groups. This hope rests on the experiences made in the months of preparation and in the many testimonies of those who since that time have already, like little children, tried to take their first steps alone. The harvest then may ripen in the form of a new church consciousness, which is growing and becoming stronger.

The words of the President von Thadden-Trieglaff regarding the Münich Kirchentag are true: It was the purpose of the Kirchentag to unite in the assurance that God gathers together His people and has an important work for them to do. Then we shall be enabled to face with confidence the difficult questions which confront our generation and towards the solution of which the world expects a contribution from evangelical Christianity.

It was remarkable to note how many in Münich spoke of the new conception they had gained of brotherhood. What can result from it will, I believe, be the building of spiritual bridges and of a new understanding among one another, even in our areas of ecclesiastical tensions, as well as a better atmosphere in business and industrial relationships.

Participants in the Kirchentag can be divided, on the whole, into two categories: those who answer the call of their church—and for them these days will have counted as a great festival of church revival—and the luke-warm ones, who go out of curiosity, yet with an inner expectation. It is the latter in particular whom one wishes to reach. For them, the man in the street whom one wishes to contact and call, the Bible becomes precisely the channel through which God can work His miracle: the granting of new insight and understanding for his every-day problems through the prism of biblical illumination. We may say that to many the Bible became the source of a new faith, as a result of the Munich Kirchentag. There was noticeable on the faces of people during those days so much awe and astonishment, radiance and real inner joy. This we may take as comfort and accept confidently as a sign of an inner enlightenment which will not quickly vanish.

From the tremendous picture of Christ given in John 15: 1-27, there shines a new dawn. Against this background, and rooted in the message of faith, the lives of many people received a new imprint and a new content, which will help them to find their way to the Church above where stands the promise: "You shall be my people".

Book Review

Two Thousand Tongues to Go by Ethel E. Wallis and Mary A. Bennett has recently been published by Harper and Brothers, New York ($3.95), as a human-interest and dramatic presentation of the work of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, also known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics. This organisation, which began twenty-five years ago, now has more than 750 members, working in almost a dozen countries, and concentrating on the tasks of reducing aboriginal languages to writing, preparing primers, and translating the Scriptures. In addition to the actual members of the organisation, who work directly under the supervision of a board in the United States of America (with affiliations in other areas), there are several thousand persons who have graduated from their summer institutes, held annually in the U.S.A. (at three different universities), England and Australia.

The distinctive emphasis of this organisation is upon reaching the small, neglected tribes, and in some instances missionaries have gone to work among a group numbering even less than one-hundred persons. Part of the reason for this special approach is the conviction held by many members that in doing this they are fulfilling the Scriptural commission to reach "every tongue, tribe and nation" as a prerequisite for the return of the Lord. In going to the Scripture-less tribes of the earth, who total less than 5 per cent. of the total population of the world, they inevitably must reach out into some of the least known and adventurous regions, and it is primarily on this aspect of their work that this book concentrates. There is no attempt made to deal with the general field of Bible translation nor even with the practical aspects of their linguistic programme, much of which has received rather wide recognition by scholars. Rather, the authors have followed the lead of the recently published *Reader's Digest* article by the same title and have only introduced the popular and romantic aspect of this rapidly growing enterprise. Taken from this point of view it is understandable that the book should contain very little reference to the work of the Bible Societies.

The Wycliffe Bible Translators constitute a "faith mission" with a very conservative theological outlook. They do not assume responsibility for the development of the church and the training of indigenous leadership, but in general let this aspect of the work devolve upon other organisations. They make a strong appeal to Bible-loving people who have a sense of urgency about getting at least something of the Scriptures to all peoples, no matter how remote, small, or previously neglected. Moreover, in their extensive use of air-planes, radio and modern linguistic techniques, they challenge many young people with the concept of a new approach to the task of reaching all mankind within this generation.

During this coming year, in which they will be celebrating their twenty-fifth anniversary, they are endeavouring to promote a very intense programme of publicity to reach as wide an audience as possible.

News From All The World

Argentina

Students at the Baptist International Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires started a Bible-selling campaign last June. They worked along two lines:

The first project was a systematic visiting of homes, one afternoon every week. After attending church, they set out for the particular district of the city chosen, visiting the homes in pairs. In many cases a copy of the Bible was left "on approval", with no obligation on the part of the recipient to pay for it until a week had expired. In such cases the students noted the name and address of the person concerned, calling again the next week; if the person did not wish to keep the copy, no pressure was brought to bear upon him.

The second project was the selling of Scriptures outside the cinema to those who were going to see the film "The Ten Commandments", when it was showing in Buenos Aires . . . . a project which met with singular success. The young people undertaking this task gained the respect and admiration not only of the theatre owners, who granted them extraordinary facilities, but of the whole neighbouring vicinity as well.

Several soldiers bought Bibles and then returned later to buy more for their buddies. A Jew bought a Bible in his own language and in Spanish and was so pleased that he gave tickets for a concert by the Argentine Symphony Orchestra, playing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, to the students who had sold him the Scriptures.

The students reported that they had countless opportunities to talk with lawyers, engineers, professors, doctors and people from almost every walk of life. They sold the Scriptures in several languages, and were enriched by the experience of meeting and conversing with such a wide variety of people in a public place. The very experience of sharing, of explaining and defending their point of view, was abundantly wholesome and rewarding. Furthermore, their earnings enabled them to continue their theological studies, for they sold hundreds of Bibles.

These young people also appeared in other principal streets of the city with their boxes of books and their open Bibles, offering their message to all who cared to stop to listen and to purchase. This kind of colportage takes courage, but the results are thrilling. These youngsters go out, too, in the residential areas and make their house-to-house canvass. Going two by two, they keep a record of names and addresses of all who purchase. They visit purchasers in a systematic follow-up in order to offer suggestions and advice.

Austria

Since the International Bible Society Youth Camp held in Austria in 1958, a Youth Group has met periodically in Vienna to promote Bible Society work in Austria. At a recent meeting various reports on Bible Society work in Austria were received and measures approved by which the Youth Group could contribute towards the work. Contributions are being raised to help cover the cost of supplying New Testaments to young army recruits. Over 1,600 Testaments had been distributed in that way during the first quarter of the year, each volume bearing the signature of the chaplain who presented it. The annual cost of this service amounts to about 30,000 Austrian schillings.

The Youth Group has also been responsible for articles on Bible Society work included in a number of youth periodicals, but the offer to arrange group visits to Bible House and invitations to lectures have not so far been taken up.

It was also reported that half the amount of money needed to print the New Testament in Ilamba (the first edition for the mission field sponsored by the *Austrian Bible Committee*—see *Bulletin* No. 37, p. 31) had already been raised, four months after the launching of the appeal. This result was in large measure due to the co-operation of young people who supplied names and addresses and even wrote appropriate individual letters.

The Youth Group is engaged in an "exchange of ideas" with similar groups of young people in Holland and England and several of its members also attended the B.F.B.S. house parties for young people last August.

Brazil

A South American Bible Study Leaders' Training Course was held at Campos de Jordao, Brazil, last February. The course was arranged by the World's Student Christian Federation and the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches. It was intended to meet the need of men "with a deep passion for the Bible, possessing all the basic knowledge which will help them to understand the Word of God and who can communicate to others their passion and their understanding". The course was attended by 40 participants from nine South American countries and was led by Suzanne de Dietrich. The organising committee had aimed at securing national delegations as interdenominational as possible, with the result that the delegation of five from Chile came from five different denominations : Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal and Presbyterian.

The programme tried to lay all the foundations (exegetical, biblical, theological and practical) for a genuine understanding of the Scriptures and gave much room to "workshop" sessions and the examination of the practical aspects of Bible study (personal study, study in groups, different methods, available material, etc.).

Summing up her impressions Suzanne de Dietrich noted, that "the main stress all through the Course was on Jesus Christ, centre of the Bible, centre and goal of history, centre of our lives. In Him we found our unity in spite of all theological or ecclesiastical differences. And because He is the Lord of all things, the needs and problems of the great Latin American continent were never out of our minds".

■

The *Bible Society of Brazil* has issued its first edition of the illustrated Gospel of Matthew in magazine format, using the American Bible Society illustrations and the newly-revised Portuguese text. One hundred thousand copies have been printed. Mark, John and Acts have already been produced; Luke will be the next project. The whole New Testament will eventually appear in the not too distant future.

Ceylon

The Rev. S. J. D. S. Weerasinghe was elected Chairman of the National Christian Council of Ceylon at its annual meeting held in July. Mr. Weerasinghe has served for many years as Secretary of the Bible Society in Ceylon and is a recognised scholar in the Sinhalese language. The meeting's theme was: "The Church—in its servitude and in its servanthood".

Corsica

A special colportage campaign took place in Corsica from July 17 to August 5. This project, held under

the auspices of the French Bible Committee, was carried out by a team of young men and women from France, Switzerland and Belgium, with the co-operation of the Bible Societies of those three countries, each Society having sent one colporteur and one Bible van. The special feature of this international team was its great variety: ages ranged from 17 to 67 and many different denominations were represented. The good team spirit and the enthusiasm of this group enabled them to meet cheerfully the uncomfortable material conditions in which they lived and to achieve a deep spiritual communion which was particularly evident in the Bible study periods, in the services and in the daily prayer meetings.

During the first ten days the camp was itinerant, the team being spread over the island, thus learning to know the country and taking the opportunity of holding evangelisation meetings. One such meeting took place at the church in Bastia, another on the terrace of a restaurant in a village of Cap Corse, two others in mountain villages in the centre of the island being accompanied by the showing of a film. The priests gave their support to the meetings, and a large number of vouchers, which could be exchanged for a Gospel, were distributed to the many people who attended.

During the last ten days the team were accommodated in a house which had been lent. Each day four small teams set out to do colportage in the neighbouring villages, one team remaining at home to rest and to cope with the domestic requirements on behalf of the rest of the group.

A Bible booth was set up in the fair at Aullène, and evangelisation meetings were held each evening in the villages to which two small teams came together to strengthen the hymn-singing and to give support to one another. Contacts with the local population were excellent and provided fruitful ground for the spreading of the Gospel. About 300 copies of the Scriptures were sold during the course of one week.

Egypt

One of the colporteurs of the Cairo Agency was authorised to spend a week early in the summer in the otherwise closed Gaza strip. It was the first time for several years that access for Christian witness in this area of tension had been obtained. Sales were reported to be very satisfactory.

England

The *British and Foreign Bible Society* has produced, in leaflet form, a table showing the distribution of the work of its Translation Department. The totals of the 320 projects on which the B.F.B.S. is at present working are:

Translations:

New languages in which no Book of Scripture has yet appeared	82
Additional books in languages already provided with at least one book of Scripture ..	50

Revisions of existing versions:

Bibles—38; New Testaments—51.

In addition, work is being completed on 43 translations of the New Testament and 56 Bible translations.

*

Four new publications are announced by the B.F.B.S.:

The *Book of Acts in Guerze*, translated by Mrs. R. D. Lytle of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, who has spent nine years among the Guerze, assisted by three African pastors, one of whom has been a Christian for thirty years. Guerze is a language spoken by 100,000 in the

N'zerekore Circle of French Guinea. Out of a total Christian community of 1,000 there are at the moment only 400 literates, but the work is growing and reading classes are held on the mission station and by the pastors.

A *revised New Testament in Motu*, the revision having been made by the Rev. P. Chatterton of the London Missionary Society, assisted by a local pastor, the Rev. Taunao Agaru. Motu is the mother tongue of 10,000 people in the central district of Papua, New Guinea. There is a literate Christian community of about 10,000 including those for whom Motu is the lingua franca.

A *new translation of the four Gospels in Russian*. This work has been accomplished by a group of Russian scholars in Paris. They worked on the principle that they should produce a translation faithful in all essentials to the Greek original, while preserving a good modern Russian style in language, easily comprehensible to everyone and yet within these limits maintaining the qualities of the Synodal text.

A *revised New Testament in Kelle* (Congo), a language spoken by 130,000 people in the Riverine area between Stanleyville and Basoko, and for about 100 miles up the Lomame River from Yalikina-Isangi on Congo River, Belgian Congo. The revision was made by the Rev. W. H. Ford of the Baptist Missionary Society, assisted by Dr. J. F. Carrington and a strong committee of African evangelists and teachers at Yalemba. The Christian community numbers 20,000.

Germany

The *Canstein Bible Society* provided 500 Bibles and New Testaments for the new Norddeutsche Lloyd flagship "Bremen", for placing in the passengers' cabins and the crew's quarters. This Bible Society is the oldest established in the world and will be celebrating the 250th anniversary of its foundation next year.

*

The Luther Haus publishing firm has, since 1953, produced 1,550,000 copies of illustrated Gospels for distribution mainly in West Germany. This has been possible thanks to a grant to be used as a revolving fund from the American Bible Society. The printing of a further 400,000 Gospels is planned, bringing the total to nearly two million.

In East Germany the number of illustrated portions circulated by the *Altenburg Bible Society* during this period amounted to over one million and will reach 1,500,000 in 1960. With the addition of the portions bound in the form of an illustrated New Testament, the total number of illustrated Bible portions which will have been produced in this way for the whole of Germany will be about 3,500,000.

*

During 1958 the *Sächsische Bible Society* arranged eleven local Bible exhibitions, which were visited by a total of 6,995 persons. Bible mission work was also intensified during that year and lectures arranged at parish meetings, for pastors and confirmation candidates and at a conference of the Evangelical Academy in Meissen.

Three Bible Weeks were arranged in relation to the Bible exhibitions, in order to try and reach a wider circle of church members and those who are unfamiliar with the Bible. Bible Days were also held in two places.

The offer of leather-bound Bibles, with a special page for a dedicatory message, to the superintendents in the different districts of the Land for presentation to ministers on their ordination, was accepted by nearly all of them.

There was a decline in Scripture circulation in 1958, the figures being (1957 figures given in brackets): Bibles 8,890 (11,317); New Testaments 3,904 (3,368); Portions 36,516 (38,368). The increase in distribution of New Testaments was due to the appearance of the revised text.

*

Bible Society youth work in Germany is increasing in strength. Several delegates attended the house parties in Britain during the summer and plans have been worked out for a Bible Society holiday camp for German speaking young people, to be held next summer in Hemeln on the Weser. Visitors from Austria, Holland and Britain have already registered for this. Participants from various other European countries are expected.

■

The Committee for Bible Mission in Germany is launching an appeal for funds for the supply of Scriptures to refugees in other parts of the world, as well as in Germany. The first objective proposed is the supply of 250 complete Bibles in Arabic to refugees in the Jerusalem area.

Indonesia

Nearly 10,000 people in Indonesia are now enrolled in Bible correspondence courses, according to the "Alliance Witness". One notice in a newspaper is sufficient to bring a flood of replies. Because of the students' enthusiasm, the enrolment continues to grow without further paid advertising.

Italy

One million Gospels of John in Italian are being printed for mass distribution and mass evangelistic campaigns to be held in major cities in Italy. Another million is planned for the near future.

Co-operating in this effort are the Rev. Louis E. Latham, director of the Great Commission Hour radio programme and of World Gospel Crusades. Correspondence courses will also be printed for a follow-up programme.

■

One of the special concerns of the Action Biblique of Geneva is to sponsor Bible witness at international and regional fairs, and towards this end it maintains a Bible House in Genoa, Italy. A recent newsletter published by Action Biblique stated:

"In January the Action Biblique participated for the first time in the fair at Rome, where 593 Bibles and over 800 portions of the Word of God (mostly the Epistle to the Romans) were sold. During the winter months from December to March, the Bible was displayed, proclaimed and sold at the following fairs throughout Italy (figures in parentheses indicate the number of Bibles sold at those fairs): In the South: Reggio Emilia (138), Bari (428), Cagliari in Sardinia (282), Rome (593). In the North: Milan (161), Turin (128), Via Po (220), Piazza Vittorio (200), San Ageta (55), Mantua (29), Ferrara (75), Leghorn (169 in 6 days), Legnano (29), etc. Other places where the Scriptures where sold and a witness given included Padua, Como, Bologna, Palermo. No stone is being left unturned to carry the witness to new places where crowds gather, and as a result the Bible is beginning to be known in Italy. In the North the Bible has been mentioned a number of times in radio broadcasts or in some newspapers . . . ."

During 1958 the Bible House at Genoa circulated 17,898 copies of the Scriptures, of which 7,217 were complete Bibles. These figures are in addition to the circulation figures given for Italy for 1958 by the Bible Society Agency there (11,888 Bibles and 188,514 Testaments and Portions).

Japan

The *Japan Bible Society* held a conference in August on the circulation of the Bible and New Testament. The conference was attended by representatives of Tokyo Bible House, Kansai Branch, and the depots in Saporo, Sendai, Nagoya and Fukuoka. The work of colporteurs, which is mainly concerned with the circulation of Portions, was deliberately excluded, as being a subject of a somewhat different nature.

Special consideration was given to the question of how to reach the local churches and book stores in each area. Although the Society is in regular contact with the main churches and book shops, the problem of reaching the smaller ones is more difficult and needs special attention.

Kenya

The Bible Society Agency in East Africa is holding a Bible Week throughout Kenya from November 29th to December 6th this year. The theme, "The Bible Speaks To-day", will appear on many thousands of posters in all the major languages of the country. The aim is to present the Bible to all races in that country as a book relevant to the situation at the present time. Exhibitions are being arranged all over the country, with a main one in Nairobi.

The Rev. Frank Bedford, secretary of the Agency, has asked for the special prayers of readers of this Bulletin for the work of the Agency at this time.

Norway

A modern translation of the New Testament in Norwegian—the so-called "Youth translation"—will appear shortly. The text will be printed across the page, with marginal notes and footnotes explaining ideas and expressions which are difficult for young people to-day to understand. At the same time the Norwegian Bible Society has also now produced the new official translation of the Bible.

Philippines

President Carlos P. Garcia has given his endorsement to a Philippine Bible House campaign to distribute 120,000 copies of the Sermon on the Mount. The distribution of this Scripture portion is part of a crusade for higher morality in public office, which is being sponsored by the International Christian Leadership group in the Philippines.

The President has cited Christ's Sermon on the Mount as a rich source of spiritual inspiration. "I have always maintained", he said, "that whatever institutions man may build for his political, social and economic advancement, these cannot long endure if they are not founded on the rock of moral practices and upright living", adding that "the Word of God should be the nation's chief guide".

Switzerland

The *Swiss Bible Society* published in June a volume containing side by side, in four languages, the Gospel of Luke and some selected Psalms. This edition is mainly intended for distribution to hotels where the volumes, attractively bound in red vinilite, are to be placed in guest rooms. The languages used are German, French, Italian and English. Several thousands have also been printed for the Netherlands Bible Society. The hotel managers are now being approached with a view to obtaining their co-operation. Further editions will be necessary to

cover the whole field, should the experiment prove satisfactory.

*

For about three years, the Swiss Bible Society has been supporting a colporteur working in Luxembourg, under the auspices of the Belgian Bible Society. Since last spring, Mr. Siegenthaler has been helped in his work by younger voluntary colporteurs from Switzerland—young people willing to give up their professional work for six months or more to help in the missionary circulation of the Scriptures. The Swiss Bible Society has also agreed to cover the additional cost involved.

At the same time, in view of the increasing demand on the part of the churches in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, after two years of experience of engaging the services of colporteurs and colportage leaders, the Société Evangélique de Genève, one of the members of the Swiss Bible Society, has appointed a second worker to serve in that capacity.

Turkey

One of the colporteurs of the sub-agency in Istanbul paid a six weeks' visit last spring to the eastern part of Turkey. The area had not been visited for many years. Most of the Scriptures were sold to members of the small scattered Assyrian and Armenian churches. However, a good number of Muslims also showed interest in the Scriptures, though opposition could be felt in several areas. Over 100 Bibles, nearly 150 New Testaments and over 400 Portions were sold. The colporteur reports a good reception by the representatives of all denominations.

United States of America

The *American Bible Society* plans to print two million copies of the Christmas Story according to Luke and Matthew in excerpt form. Of these, 1,250,000 will be in the King James Version and 750,000 in the Revised Standard Version.

*

Four Bible Societies in the U.S.A. are celebrating their 150th anniversary this year: The Connecticut Bible Society, the Massachussets Bible Society, the Bible Society of Maine and the New York Bible Society.

*

"The Everlasting Light" is the theme chosen by the American Bible Society this year for its World-wide Bible Reading programme, for use during the period from Thanksgiving to Christmas.

Last year the World-wide Bible Reading material was shipped to thirty-two countries, and bookmarks on which were listed suggested daily Bible readings and brochures containing helpful suggestions for the pastor, were translated into Korean, Spanish, Greek, Thai, Chinese and Portuguese for local use.

*

In a special ceremony at the 143rd annual meeting of the American Bible Society in New York City, Bibles bound in red morocco were presented to the official representatives of Alaska and Hawaii, the two newest States to be added to the U.S.A. The Bibles, appropriately inscribed, have been placed in the State House at each Capitol, and will be used by officials taking their oaths of office. Scriptures translated in the principal languages used in both Alaska and Hawaii, were also supplied by the Bible Society for the State Libraries at Juneau and Honolulu.

*

The A.B.S. has donated Scripture volumes to the American National Exhibition in Moscow to replace Bibles reported to be "removed or damaged by tremendous wear" by visitors to the book display. The new supply of Bibles was shipped by air by the United States Information Agency from Washington, D.C.

Included in this shipment were Russian Bibles in the new orthography, New Testaments in the Slovak language, Greek New Testaments for theological students, Scripture portions in Russian, English Bibles in various bindings and versions and copies of the Illustrated New Testament with English text and 581 photographs, maps and diagrams.

Press reports indicated that it was necessary to station guards around the Bible display and the Society offered the new supply of books in order to permit visitors to examine the Bibles more freely.

*

The first complete translation of the New Testament in Beti, a language spoken in the centre and south of the Cameroons, was published this year by the A.B.S. This is a preliminary edition of 3,000 copies with a number of page drawings. The translator, the Rev. François Akoa, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of the Cameroons, is now engaged in translating the Old Testament into Beti. Mr. Akoa states that there are more than a million speakers of the Beti language, about a third of whom are literate. Use of the Beti language is on the increase, he reports, and it is used in churches, schools and in radio broadcasting. Mr. Akoa recently visited the A.B.S. in New York City, where Dr. Laton E. Holmgren, of the A.B.S., presented him with a specially bound copy of the Beti New Testament.

United Bible Societies

From August 31 to September 3 a conference on Bible Illustration was held in Edinburgh, under the auspices of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES and chaired by its President the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Bradford. This consultation was attended by about seventy participants from eighteen countries—theologians, art critics, publishers, religious educationists, Bible Society personnel. Prof. P. Althaus' study on the Second Commandment helped the meeting to recognise that there is no valid objection, from the biblical point of view, to appropriate Bible illustration. The main part of the discussion, however, turned on the problem of the possibilities and dangers of Bible illustration. No attempt was made to lay down hard and fast rules in that respect. It was, on the contrary, recognised that because of the great diversities of people for whom certain publications were intended, e.g. differences in culture, education, religious training, age and temperament; the nature of the publication, e.g. selections, portions, New Testament and Bible; the type of content and style (narrative portions may perhaps be best illustrated by "scenes" from stories, whereas the poetical books lend themselves more readily to symbolic treatment); and the distinct historical traditions of the various publishing societies, no attempt could be made to formulate definite rules or recommendations as to which types of illustrations should be employed.

At the same time an effort was made, on the basis of a systematic analysis of the component elements of pictorial means of communication, to determine various classes of illustrations, the consideration of which could help Bible Societies and Bible publishers in their elaboration of future illustrated editions of the Scriptures. It was evident that a factual representation of some biblical object or animal had to be distinguished from symbolic illustrations, or

from the highly subjective treatment of a biblical scene, or again from the illustrations taken from present-day life in order to "actualise" the biblical message.

The conference wished to encourage the churches and Bible Societies in all areas and cultures "to look for, encourage, sponsor and support such artists as may seem capable and interested in producing necessary illustrations, particularly those who, guided by the Holy Spirit, can personally witness to the truth of the Gospel and its redemptive force".

On each day of the conference the afternoon session took the form of a public meeting, in which a lively interest was shown, dealing with such subjects as "Contemporary Art and the Christian Message", "Possibilities and Dangers of Bible Illustration for the Understanding of the Biblical Text" and "Photography in the Service of Bible Illustration".

As background material for the discussions a rich display had been prepared of contemporary editions of illustrated Scriptures, from whole Bibles to selections and biblical catechism.

In relation to the conference the adjudication for an open competition on Bible illustration took place and the best entries were exhibited. Artists from 17 countries in all parts of the world had submitted entries, numbering over 750.

Miscellaneous

The application of electronic computers to the transcription of books into Braille is likely to open exciting prospects for blind readers. With the aid of one of these machines, a 300-page book can now be transcribed into Braille in one hour—a task which would take almost a week for several skilled transcriptors to complete. Moreover, it takes about two years to train specialists of Braille, whereas the new method does not demand a knowledge of Braille on the part of the operator.

The Braille technique has certain features in common with the automatic translation of languages—one of the subjects discussed at the International Conference on Information Processing which was held at Unesco headquarters in Paris from the 15th to 20th June this year.

The computer equipped to convert into Braille receives punched cards on to which the printed text has been transcribed and which feed every letter, number and punctuation mark into the magnetic store. Also stored are the complicated rules of Braille transcription. The machine responds to as many as 600 instructions per word in less than one-fortieth of a second. The translation appears in the form of coded symbols on punched cards, which are passed on to a printing unit and then to an embossing machine which produces plates for use in a rotary press.

Braille consists of 63 combinations of six raised dots representing the alphabet, numbers and punctuation marks, and more than 180 contractions and abbreviations similar to short-hand notation. It has complex rules wherein the symbols often change their meaning according to the context. To cope with this, the computer memory lists words or parts of words which cannot be converted on the simple letter-for-letter basis: each entry in this table is spelt out as a pattern of magnetic dots, and the computer is able to scan the list one letter at a time as one would do when looking up a word in the dictionary. Thanks to this technique, the machine is free from the common human failing of making mistakes through false memory associations. The machine transcribes 4,000 words a minute whereas a human being only does 40.

Personalia

On 17th August, the **Rev. Y. Schaaf** and his wife, after a few months' language study in France, left with their child for the French Cameroons, in order to take up work in Yaoundé as secretary of the new joint British and Foreign Bible Society/Netherlands Bible Society Agency there.

In recent years Mr. Schaaf has been closely related to broadcasting, for four years bearing part of the responsibility for designing and giving shape to the programmes of IKOR (a Dutch Inter-Church Radio Corporation). Mr. Schaaf was ordained last June.

*

The **Rev. Percy R. Thomas,** B.A. has been appointed to the post of General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society in New Zealand, in succession to the Rev. Robert F. Chisholm, M.A., B.D., who is due to retire in June, 1960.

Mr. Thomas has for the past eighteen years been a member of the Home Staff of the B.F.B.S., serving as a District and Regional Secretary before becoming Assistant Home Secretary in 1951. In 1958 he became Secretary for the Home Auxiliaries of the B.F.B.S. and early in 1959 the responsibility for Visual Aids was added to his duties when he became Home Secretary.

*

The **Rev. Richard H. Ellingson** has relinguished his service as Executive Secretary of the American Bible Society, with responsibility for distribution of the Scriptures in the United States of America, having accepted the call to become pastor of the Zion Lutheran Church, Clear Lake, Iowa. Mr. Ellingson has worked with the American Bible Society for just over ten years.

Contributors to this issue

The Rev. E. H. Robertson is Study Secretary of the United Bible Societies.

The Rev. S. Smaadahl is Assistant Organising Secretary of the Norwegian Bible Society.

The Rev. F. Visser is Secretary for Relations with the Churches, of the Netherlands Bible Society.

Dr. K. Zabel is Secretary of Bibelwerk, the liaison body of Bible Societies in East Germany.

The Rev. Carl W. Larsen is American Bible Society Secretary for the Northwestern district of the U.S.A., having been temporarily seconded to the study on the Use of the Bible in the U.S.A.

The Rev. Francis E. Vipond is Director of the programme of the National Christian Council of Canada on The Use and Understanding of the Bible.

Dr. J. Koper is a former missionary in Indonesia, now engaged on the study on the use of the Bible in that country.

The Rev. S. J. de S. Weerasinghe is Secretary of the Bible Society Agency in Ceylon.

Mr. O. K. K. Nelson is A.B.S. Secretary in the Bible Society of Brazil.

The Rev. D. Brown is B.F.B.S. Regional Secretaryi n Yeovil.

The Rev. Hans Hölzel is Chairman of the Bavarian Bible Society.